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The Limits of Toleration Within the Church of England from 1632 to 1642

BY

NANCY ELNORA SCOTT

THESIS

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PREFACE.

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The following monograph is a study of the religious ideas current in the Church of England during the epoch from 1632 to 1642. This period, the ten years just preceding the Civil War, was chosen because it was one of intense religious excitement in which the Anglican position presented the curious paradox of the combination of toleration in matters of belief with the rigid enforcement in matters of practice of conformity to her own Articles. It was a period of great activity on the part of the national Church. Her ranks contained some of the most brilliant men she has ever produced. Their opinions on the religious situation during this troubled period when the Church was involved in the struggle which resulted in her overthrow by the Long Parliament are available, since most of them wrote extensively. It has been my purpose through a study of their own words to arrive at their reasons for withholding in matters of practice, in the outward forms of worship, that liberty which in matters purely of belief they so readily granted. To make clear the cause of the limits which they accordingly put upon toleration as we understand it, I have endeavored to sketch in the following chapters their conception of a comprehensive Church through which the necessity for freedom of belief need not result in the sacrifice of unity of organization.

For the use of the works of Archbishop Laud and of Bishop Hall I am indebted to the courtesy of the Philadelphia Divinity School.

I also wish to acknowledge the valuable assistance of my colleague, Miss Laura C. Green, in reading manuscript and proof-sheets.

NANCY E. SCOTT.

WILSON COLLEGE,
CHAMBERSBURG, PA.
May, 1912.

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CHAPTER I.

REPRESENTATIVE MEN.

To obtain an opinion fairly representative of the attitude toward toleration within the Church of England during the epoch preceding the Civil War, I have chosen for analysis the writings of five men who were her leaders in different phases of the conflicts in which she was then engaged, men who held different positions within her ranks, and who differed widely in temperament and in habits of mind. They form an interesting group. They were all men of strength. Even through such a medium as that of theological controversy, their personalities still throb with life and vigor. The Renaissance in England had not yet spent its force. They were the last of the Greeks of our modern age. They, too, felt the fresh enthusiasm and the buoyancy of spirit born of that new discovery of the beauty and power of the human mind. Deep sincerity and singleness of purpose characterized all of them. Each, in a different sphere, wielded an influence that was wide and powerful.

The controlling factor in their religious policy was the conviction that conformity to the one authorized system of worship was vitally necessary to the safety of the State. This opinion derives its interest from the fact that these men were the religious liberalists of their age. They readily acknowledged that it was impossible not to allow men to think as they liked, that outward forms could not fetter

ideas; but because of this very truth they argued that for other reasons than control of belief these same outward forms might rigidly be enforced without doing violence to the conscience of any individual. By emphasizing their liberalism in matters of belief, they sought to justify their enforcement of uniformity in matters of practice. This juxtaposition of contrary ideas was an outgrowth of the transitional character of the seventeenth century. As a result of the Renaissance and the Reformation, the right of individuals to form their own religious opinions had been made evident to these Anglican churchmen; but its corollary, that differences in religious practice need not destroy united loyalty to the State, was not yet plain. It was only the very clear need of the State itself in 1689 which could force the recognition of that truth and secure the passage of the Toleration Act. To these men unity in the State demanded unity in religion.

During the period when Catholicism was making its last desperate struggle to maintain its hold upon England, William Chillingworth at Oxford crossed swords in scholastic combat with the learned subtilty of the Jesuits. He lived from 1602 until 1644, and was perhaps the greatest controversialist of the age. In 1630 Knott, a Jesuit, published a book called "Charity Mistaken." Knott was answered by Dr. Potter, provost of Queen's College, Oxford, in a book called "Want of Charity Justly Charged on all Such Romanists as Dare Affirm that Protestancie Destroyeth Salvation." Knott replied in "Mercy and Truth, or Charity Maintained by Catholics." Chillingworth became interested and decided to answer Knott's pamphlet instead of Dr. Potter.

He was eminently fitted for the task which he undertook. Born at Oxford, of cultured, well-to-do parents, he had early been destined for a university career. He became a thorough scholar. His wide and ready knowledge enabled him easily to cope with the learning of his Jesuit opponent.

Moreover, his own religious experience gave to him the peculiar advantage of knowing the views of the opposite side as well as his own. Several years earlier than this, during a controversy with the Jesuit, Fisher, he had been led by the resistless logic of his opponent regarding the infallibility of the Roman Church to doubt the truth of his own position and finally to join the Roman Church. Asked by the Catholics to write for publication his reasons for making the change, he had been impelled, on making further investigation, to deny the infallibility of any Church whatever, and to base man's hope of salvation on the study and interpretation of the Scripture, aided by reason alone. He had, therefore, left the communion of Rome, but had returned to Protestant ranks. His answer to Knott, which proved to be the great work of his life, is in one sense a justification of his own religious action. His main thought is indicated in the title, "The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation." No Church, he held, was infallible; but the errors of some Churches were dangerous, and of others harmless. In the latter group was the Church of England. Moreover, as his own experience proved, one might, nay ought, belong to her communion, even when not believing all her less fundamental dogmas. He himself long refused to take orders in his own Church because he could not find scriptural proof of the truth of all of the Thirty-nine Articles, and on signing them much later, and accepting preferment, he said he did so as an act of obedience to authority, not implying that he believed all of them. So penetrating, so clear-cut was his logic in explaining his position that Locke spoke of his book as the best one he knew of to "teach the way of right reasoning."¹

The "Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation" does not deal directly with the problem in which we are immediately interested, that is, the author's attitude toward those Protestant sects in England which had left, or were

¹ Des Maizeaux, Locke, 235.

on the point of leaving, the communion of the Established Church. His arguments along this line are not so well shaped nor so fully developed as they would have been had he turned all of his attention to this particular problem. In fact, upon the differences between Protestants, he touched as lightly as possible, since his great objective point was the defense of all Protestants from the attacks made upon them by the Roman Catholics. Naturally, he did not dwell at length on the dangers, due to perhaps a too-far swinging of the pendulum in the opposite direction, which had arisen within the Protestant ranks themselves. Consequently, too, his tolerance of minor errors of belief among Protestants is much more clearly evident than is his insistence upon the maintenance, by force if need be, of a single comprehensive Church. Thus he is commonly given more credit for lenience than is perhaps his due. Nevertheless, we shall see, in the analysis of his work, that his treatment of his subject is so thorough that his position on every point in the controversy may clearly be ascertained.

The man who will stand for all time identified with the cruel intolerance of the Anglican Church of this period is William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury from 1633 until 1644. Upon him, naturally, fell the burden of enforcing uniformity of worship. Just as in the case of Chillingworth circumstances emphasized his tolerance, so for Laud circumstances emphasized directly opposite tendencies. In reality each of them shared the other's dominant trait. The personal relations between them were life-long and intimate. Laud was the godfather of Chillingworth. He was sorry for the latter's apostacy to Rome, and on his return from the Catholic college at Douay and before he re-entered the English Church, he received him affectionately and kindly. Later, when he heard of the writing of "The Religion of Protestants" he was doubtful as to what the result might be, and gave orders at Oxford that the young man's work

be carefully watched. But on reading the book he found nothing in it to criticise. Laud did not stand apart from the other leaders of the Anglican Church. That he did not is shown by his relations not only with Chillingworth but with the other three men of the group under consideration. He discovered the genius of Jeremy Taylor and caused his advancement. Although he feared the free thinking of John Hales and criticised him, he became his firm friend and urged him to accept more active service in the Church. He suspected the Puritanical tendencies of Bishop Hall and put spies upon him, but was forced to acknowledge that his suspicion had been without just cause. All of these men in fact willingly supported the system of which he was the head. All of them felt and acted from similar motives. Upon him as chief executive of the Church devolved the duty of putting into effect the harsher side of their system, and upon him, accordingly, has rested the severest criticism of later generations. The fault lay partly, it is true, in the man, but far more in the system.

Personally Laud was not unkindly, or indifferent to ordinary human relationships and feelings. But he seldom revealed the softer side of his nature, for the opposite course was demanded by duty as he saw it, and from duty he never swerved. In his diary, meant only for himself, we find here and there glimpses of him as he really was, apart from the outward circumstances of his life. It is most often in his naïve jottings down of his dreams that we thus see him. They are largely political, but occasionally the real man appears. He dwells with delightful reminiscence on the vision of an old gentleman who had been kind to him in his childhood. With extreme tenderness he mentions the beauty of his mother's face, as she seemed to bend over his bed. In another dream he describes a meeting with the Savior as "one of the most comfortable passages" he ever had in his life.² He must have had little time for nature,

² Works, III, 157.

but it too was not without its appeal to him. With evident pleasure he relates going on horseback to the mountains. In a few simple words, almost unconsciously, he gives us a clear picture of the unusual brightness of the late October day, so warm that he and his company dined in the open air.³ His charities were broadly and wisely bestowed. The poor of several English towns still receive the benefit of funds left by him. He was genuinely interested in education. He established a number of foundations for poor boys. In his administration as Chancellor of the University of Oxford he was scrupulously active. His own religious life was deep and free from affectation. He was always in earnest; so much so that at times there is about his words a fearful kind of humor. As he ascended the scaffold he said to those waiting to hear his last words, "This is an uncomfortable time to preach."⁴ Just before the executioner did his office he prayed, "Lord, I am coming as fast as I can."⁵ His mind was almost purely political, not broadly nor deeply so, for he saw only the politics of the moment, and then only from the point of view of the side with which he was in sympathy; but here his vision had the piercing clearness, the distinct comprehension of the fanatic, the man who sees but one thing, freed from all inter-relationships. To him Charles was king by divine right, the ruler of both Church and State. The unity necessary in the State could be preserved only by maintaining a like unity in the Church. That those who differed with him on these points could be acting with as much sincerity as himself, seemed impossible to him. Hence the irreconcilable conflict of their ideas was equally unapparent to him. He could admit of no compromise. He went blindly on, trying to force universal recognition for the side which to him seemed so clearly reasonable.

³ Works, III, 174.

⁴ Works, IV, 430.

⁵ Works, IV, 438.

A man as different from Laud in temperament as a man could well be was Joseph Hall, who lived from 1574 to 1656. During our epoch he was bishop of Exeter and Norwich. He was most actively engaged in the last struggles to support Episcopacy against the attacks made upon it by domestic foes before its overthrow by the Long Parliament. With Morton and Ussher he was a member of the committee of "moderate" prelates formed in March, 1641, by Williams to try to effect a compromise. He protested vigorously against the proposal to deprive bishops of their right to vote in the House of Lords. In July, 1641, he was one of the thirteen bishops impeached. By the Sequestration Act of 1643 he was deprived of the rents of his bishopric of Norwich. In 1647 his episcopal palace was plundered and he and his family ejected. The remaining ten years of his life he spent in retirement, employed for the most part in the writing of devotional books. He died September 8, 1656, at the age of eighty-two.

His work differs from that of Chillingworth in that it deals directly with the relations in England between the Established Church and those Protestants who opposed it. He wrote no great treatise covering the whole field, but among the ten volumes of his works, two are controversial in character and contain sermons, tracts, letters, and pamphlets, some of them really books, and from these we can easily ascertain his attitude. He was a thorough scholar, but he did not write merely from the standpoint of a man of letters, interested in theory only, but as one actively engaged in the administration of the Church. He was deeply worried by the useless folly of the prevalent quarrels when compared to the demands of the real duties of life. It was along this practical line that he sought to lead men away from their dissensions. For instance, one long tract of distinctly devotional character on "How Enoch Walked with

God" had in its preface addressed to the clergy of his diocese the following earnest plea:

"The pens of almost all writers are now employed on certain polemical questions, foolish indeed, for the most part and unlearned."

"I am utterly weary of, and sorry for, those wranglings, by which the Christian world is miserably agitated: and I wish it could be possible to appease them by any means in my power, I say not by my prayers, sighs, or tears only, but by any labor or fatigue of mine, or even at last by my blood!"

"May God, may God, I say, who alone can, in his good time provide a remedy for these disorders! Let us, Brethren, in the meantime, use our utmost diligence to draw off the minds of men from these vain wranglings and disputes, to the deep study of practical piety."

"It is heaven that we seek: but heaven will never be attained by contests and disputes, but by faith and a godly life."⁶

Hall's tendencies were Puritanical. From the Tower, where he was imprisoned after the impeachment of the thirteen bishops by the Puritan Parliament in 1641, he wrote in defense of himself that he had been "more like a Presbyter than a Bishop." "Recall," he said, "whether I have not rather, from some beholders, undergone the censure of a too humble remissness; as, perhaps, stooping too low beneath the eminence of Episcopal dignity; whether I have not suffered as much in some opinions, for the winning mildness of my administration, as some others for a rough severity."⁷ He referred to his trouble with Laud, who had as archbishop had Hall called to account three times before the king, and had kept spies upon him to see that he did not wink at non-conformity in his diocese of Exeter. When

⁶ Works, VII, 295.

⁷ Works, I, XLIX.

Hall threatened to give up his office, under such evidences of distrust, Laud withdrew his spies. However, when the latter made the report of his metropolitan visitation in 1634, he truthfully wrote to the king, "I must do my Lord of Exeter this right, that for his majesty's instructions, they have been carefully observed."⁸ It is because of these strongly Puritanical leanings, that I have included Hall in this group. The fact that in spite of such tendencies he still supported Laud, is proof of the existence in the minds of men of totally opposite types of a strong belief in the necessity for a system of enforced uniformity.

Just as Hall valiantly defended the Church of England on the eve of the Civil War, so Jeremy Taylor lifted for her a loyal voice during the storm and stress of that conflict. He is perhaps the best known of the seventeenth century divines. His sermons and some of his devotional writings, "The Golden Grove," "Holy Living," "Holy Dying," his "Life of Christ," or "The Great Exemplar," are still widely read and admired for their purity and depth of sentiment as well as for the majestic beauty of their style. It is well known that without Taylor seventeenth century English prose would have lacked one of its finest ornaments. Even greater than the power of his written word was the appeal of his oratory; "silver-tongued Jeremy" he was called.

He was born in Cambridge in 1613. At the age of thirteen he entered the University, and at twenty was elected fellow of his college. Later, while lecturing temporarily in London, the fame of his eloquence reached Laud, then archbishop of Canterbury. Laud sent for Taylor to preach before him at Lambeth, and was so impressed with his ability that he placed him among the number of his own chaplains and had him elected a fellow of All Souls, Oxford. Laud's letter to Dr. Richard Astley, warden of All Souls, by which he secured Taylor's election is very charac-

⁸ Works, V, Part II, 325.

teristic of him and shows his high opinion of Taylor. He wrote, as he said, "on behalf of an honest man and a good scholar . . . being willing to recommend such an one to you as you might thank me for, I am resolved to pitch upon Mr. Jeremy Taylor, of whose abilities and sufficiencies every ways I have received very good assurance, I do hereby heartily pray you to give him all furtherance by yourself and the Fellows at your next election, not doubting that he will approve himself a worthy and learned member of that Society . . . I doubt not but you will use him with so fair respects, as befits a man of his rank and learning, for which I will give you thanks. So I leave him to your kindness, and rest,

"Your very loving friend,

"W. CANT."⁹

"LAMBETH HOUSE,

"Oct. 23, 1635."

Taylor remained at Oxford two years, from 1636 to 1638. There he became the friend of Chillingworth, who was then engaged in writing "The Religion of Protestants." In 1638 he accepted a living at Uppingham in Ruthlandshire, from which, like other Royalist clergy, he was ejected by a decree of the Long Parliament in 1642. During the Civil War he served the king for some time as chaplain. At the defeat of Col. Charles Girard before Cardigan Castle, February 4, 1644, he was taken prisoner. After his release he went into retirement in Wales where he supported himself by conducting a private school. It was here in 1647 in this quiet retreat, "safe," as he said, alike "through the courtesies of his friends and the gentleness and mercies of a noble enemy" from the "great storm which had dashed the vessel of the Church in pieces,"¹⁰ that he wrote "A Discourse of

⁹ Laud, Works, VI, Part II, 437.

¹⁰ Liberty of Prophesying, Ded. Epist., CCCXCIII.

the Liberty of Propheſying with its juſt Limits and Temper: ſhowing the unreaſonableneſs of preſcribing to other men's faith and the iniquity of perſecuting different opinions."¹¹ He had the ſpirit of a peacemaker. He was ſanguine and mild-tempered, and had an imaginative, poetical ſoul to which the diſcord of ſtrife was altogether alien. To him the meſſage of Chriſtianity was meekneſs and gentleneſs, not war and bloodſhed.¹² He realized the innate weakneſs of man and the poſſibility of error.

Although this book of Taylor's was written in 1647, I have felt juſtified in making uſe of it to arrive at the attitude of the Church from 1632 to 1642. For during that period Taylor, as has been ſhown, was one of her moſt influential leaders. Events from 1642 to 1647 were ſuch as to emphasize and deepen, rather than to change his belief in the characteristic Anglican program. That program he again offered to England as a ſolution of exiſting difficulties. The ſize and formal nature of the work, the fact that it was written during the diſpoſſeſſion of the old Church, and after the triumph of the Puritans at Naſeby, make it one of the moſt important expositions we have. That the events of the War had not materially changed Taylor's attitude toward the ſituation in general will alſo be ſeen later in the ſimilarity between his ideas and thoſe of the men who wrote before the War began. He ſet forth with careful detail the Anglican idea of a comprehensive Church. In everything except the commonly accepted fundamental truths of Chriſtian doctrine he pleaded for toleration of differences of belief, ſince ſuch differences were inevitable, and alſo unimportant becauſe non-eſſential. Upon this liberal ſide of his Church's doctrine he laid eſpecial emphasis becauſe to him it ſeemed a way to calm the ſtrife of the ſectaries. Taken in this light only, his book is an earneſt plea for toleration,

¹¹ Ibid., CCCXCVIII.

¹² Ibid., CCCXCV.

and one is apt to interpret the word as we now use it, to mean the allowance not only of differences of belief, but also of differences in rites and ceremonies and even in church organization. It is in this light that those who have accused Taylor of insincerity have read his book. They compare his tolerant attitude in 1647 when he was among the oppressed with his practice as bishop of Down and Connor under the Restoration government, when he put into effect the other part of the Anglican program, conformity, forced if need be, to the Established Church. This view, as we shall see, he clearly expressed in a sermon at Dublin. But the same view is by no means absent from "The Liberty of Prophesying," as readily may be seen when one considers that work as a whole. These men combined always the two contrary tendencies, liberality of belief and rigidity of practice. To consider one side only of the policy of any of them is to get a view which is either too harsh or too lenient.

Thus far the men chosen for study either have been actively engaged in the administration of the Church of England or in the public defense of her doctrines. The objection might possibly be made that the views of such men would most naturally be prejudiced and one-sided. In this connection it is worth while to consider the ideas of "the ever memorable Mr. John Hales of Eaton" (1584-1650), concerning whom no such doubt can arise. The circumstances of his life and the characteristics of his mind combined to make it possible for him to give a peculiarly unbiased opinion on the religious controversies of the day. He spent practically his entire life in scholarly retirement, as student, scholar, and professor at Oxford, and from 1613 to 1648 as a fellow at Eton. He took orders, and occasionally preached, but never accepted any church preferment until in 1639 [his 55th year] he somewhat reluctantly accepted a canonry at Windsor with which Laud insisted on favoring him. He was entirely without personal ambition.

He spent most of his time at Eton among his books. Clarendon calls him "the most separated from the world of any man then living," but he adds, "he was not in the least degree inclined to melancholy, but on the contrary, of a very open and pleasant conversation; and therefore was very well pleased with the resort of his friends to him, who were such as he had chosen, and in whose company he delighted, and for whose sake he would sometimes, once in a year, resort to London, only to enjoy their cheerful conversation."¹⁸ Thus, although in one sense he lived apart from the world, he was by no means indifferent to what went on about him. No one took a keener interest in affairs. The men, too, whom he had chosen as his friends, and who looked to him for genial sympathy, advice and counsel, were leaders in various lines of thought. They were the scholars, Sir Henry Savile, whom Hales assisted in editing Chrysostom, Sir Henry Wotten, his daily companion as provost of Eton, Chillingworth, whose religious views he largely influenced, the gentle and learned Falkland, the courtly, dashing Suckling, and rare old Ben Jonson. Such a company shows that Hales was no monastic pedant. All who mention him speak of his singularly sweet and lovable disposition and the charm of his conversation. Thus he was most humanly a part of the world, and yet unconnected with it in any way that could obscure his vision or prejudice his opinion in regard to any phase of its activities.

He had a mind capable of making use of his unique position. The fact that he was the greatest scholar of his time made his reliance on plain common sense and reason the firmer. With piercing clearness he saw straight to the basic principle of every argument. To find the truth was the sole object of his life. As he said in a letter to Laud, "the pursuit of truth hath been my only care, ever since I first understood the meaning of the word. For this I have for-

¹⁸ Life of the Earl of Clarendon, I, 59.

saken all hopes, all friends, all desires, which might bias me, and hinder me from driving right at what I aimed. For this, I have spent my money, my means, my youth, my age, and all I have; that I might remove from myself that censure of Tertullian,—‘*Suo vitio quis quid ignorat?*’ If with all this cost and pains, my purchase is but error; I may safely say, to err hath cost me more, than it has many to find the truth: and truth itself shall give me this testimony at last, that if I have missed of her, it is not my fault, but my misfortune.”¹⁴ Singleness of purpose such as this, combined as it was with keen insight and the greatest intellectual vigor, makes what Hales considered truth of exceptional interest to the student of the religious conflicts of this troubled period.

Such are the men chosen as representative of the Church during this epoch: Laud, her archbishop; Chillingworth, her defender against the attacks of the Jesuits; Hall, the practical bishop of Puritanical tendencies who resisted to the last the usurpations of the Long Parliament; Taylor, her most gifted preacher; and Hales, her most disinterested scholar. But before beginning the analysis of the writings of this group of men with the purpose of showing why they believed it necessary to compel even under penalty of death all Englishmen to conform to the Established Church, I have thought it helpful to include an account of the work of Richard Hooker, an important factor in their common theological heritage.

¹⁴ Works, I, 137–8.

CHAPTER II.

THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND—"ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY OF HOOKER."

In order fully to understand the religious conceptions of the Anglican clergy of the Civil War era, it is essential to have some acquaintance with those of Richard Hooker who back in the days of Elizabeth labored for the purification of the formative period of the Church. His exhaustive treatise, "Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity" (1594-1600), came to be looked upon by the later men as almost indisputable authority in all matters pertaining to the Church. The respect and honor in which he was held were fully merited. He wrote at a time when to many people the polity and dogma of the Church still seemed in a chaotic state. To explain and popularize them, genius such as his was needed. Even as a boy at school his biographer, Walton, describes him as "an early questioner, quietly inquisitive, why this was, and that was not to be remembered? Why this was granted and that denied?"¹ This inquiring, judicious spirit he kept through life. He was a scholar of the most careful type. The variety of his allusions and the accuracy of his quotations are still matters of wonder. With every possible field in which the sectaries claimed a justifiable precedent for their peculiar forms he was thoroughly familiar. In argument his habitual plan was to confute his opponent from the latter's own authorities. He never did so, however, in a vindictive spirit, nor without granting the truth, where possible, of much that was claimed. In this way he sought to win men by careful reasoning.

¹ Hooker, Works (Walton's "Life"), I, p. 63.

The religious questions in dispute in his day were those which were to cause the religious division at the time of the Civil War. But as yet both parties hoped peaceably to mold the national Church to their own ideas. The gap between them was not yet so apparent but what each party thought the other would yield to argument. The struggle affected Hooker personally in that the evening lecturer at the Temple in London where he preached in the morning was Travers, a Presbyterian. The conflict of ideas in their sermons became so marked that Archbishop Whitgift removed Travers. The latter defended himself in a "Supplication to the Council," which was met by Hooker's "Answer." Hooker felt, however, that the questions in dispute were of more serious moment than could be handled satisfactorily in such a manner. He felt, as he said in a letter to Whitgift, that Travers was "a good man and that, therefore, it was only right that diligent search be made in the Scripture and other laws both human and divine" to see whether there was any justice in his demands for changes in the government and ceremonies of the Anglican Church. Hooker accordingly set about such an examination of the authorities. The conclusion which he reached after long years of careful investigation was that "the present form of church government which the laws of this land have established is such as no law of God nor reason of man has hitherto been alleged of force sufficient to prove that they do ill, who to the utmost of their power withstand the alteration thereof."² The process of investigation by which he had fully satisfied himself as to the rightfulness of this conclusion, he embodied in all its elaborate detail in a treatise in which he intended, as he explained, "the satisfaction of others, by a demonstration of the reasonableness of our laws of Ecclesiastical Polity," and in which he thought he had laid "a hopeful foundation for the Church's peace."³

² Pref., Ch. I, 2.

³ Hooker, Works (Walton's "Life"), I, 89-90 f. n.

The work was to be in eight books, covering: (1) the nature of law in general, (2) whether divine law only should guide us in all things, (3) whether ecclesiastical laws are all specifically and unchangeably set down in Scripture, (4) whether the so-called "popish" features of the Anglican Church were harmful, (5) church ceremonies and powers of ordination, (6) jurisdiction of lay-elders, (7) jurisdiction of bishops, (8) the king's power of ecclesiastical dominion."⁴

Hooker began this work in 1586. In 1592 the first four books were entered in the stationer's register, and in 1594 were published. In 1597 the fifth book was published separately. Unfortunately the last three books on the subjects most in dispute from 1632 to 1642 were still at that time unpublished. So we cannot know just how much the later group of men whom we are about to consider were affected by them. Hooker had completed them before 1600, and various persons, as we shall see, knew of their contents. The general trend of them also is evident from the nature of the other five books so that there need be no doubt as to his opinion on the mooted questions of the rival authorities of lay elders and of bishops and on the share of the king in ecclesiastical control. The other question so often discussed as to the entire genuineness of the last books as they finally appeared is of little consequence in connection with the men in power from 1632 to 1642. How much the rough draughts may have influenced those in whose hands they remained up until this time, and through them, others, there is no way of determining. As a possibility, however, they cannot be overlooked.

When about a month after Hooker's death in 1600 Archbishop Whitgift sent to secure the manuscripts of the last three books they were not to be found. It is thought that they were destroyed by some Puritan relatives of Hooker's

⁴ End of Preface, Works, I, p. 153.

widow. The rough draughts of the books, however, were secured by the archbishop and by him given to Dr. Spenser, a man who had been an intimate friend of Hooker's while the work was in progress. Spenser was assisted in the preparation of the draughts for publication by a young scholar named Henry Jackson, to whom it seems was due the editing and "polishing," as he called it, of the eighth book, which Spenser intended to publish first. Jackson did so much with the eighth book that he thought that he rather than Spenser ought to have the honor of editing it. It is barely possible that at Spenser's death in 1614 Jackson did not turn over his own "polished" eighth book along with the other Hooker papers to Dr. King, bishop of London, to whom Spenser had bequeathed them. In this way might be accounted for, says Keble,⁵ the superiority of the manuscript of the eighth book now in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, over the other three copies. It may be Jackson's copy. Hooker's papers as delivered to Dr. King remained untouched in his hands and in those of his son until Archbishop Abbot claimed them for the Lambeth library some time before 1633. During the time that Laud was archbishop they remained unused save by occasional copyists, with whom, says Keble,⁶ the eighth book seemed most in favor, a significant fact since then the king's endeavor to control the Church was most pronounced. In 1640 Laud's library was made over to Prynne, and from him in 1644, by vote of the Commons, to Hugh Peters. By these Puritan custodians the publication of Hooker's works was continued. In 1651 the sixth and eighth books were published. Of the sixth, Keble shows clearly⁷ that only the few opening paragraphs are part of Hooker's original sixth book, the rest is Hooker's composition, but is a part of some other tract or

⁵ Hooker, Works, I, p. xxiii. Editor's preface.

⁶ Hooker, Works, I, p. xv. Editor's preface.

⁷ Hooker, Works, I, p. xvi. Editor's preface.

sermon interpolated carelessly in the "Polity." In 1662 Gauden of the See of Worcester published the seventh book. How he obtained the manuscript he did not say, and no one yet knows. However, internal evidence proclaims it to be Hooker's.⁸ Thus, at length appeared the whole, or what claimed to be the whole of Hooker's great work. But, as has been said, it is only the first five books which are known to have had much weight before the Civil War, and it is his opinions as expressed in them that we shall consider in order that the debt of the later men to him may be apparent.

Perhaps the greatest similarity between them lies in the nature and general trend of the logic of their arguments. Both he and they separate essential beliefs from non-essential opinions in religious matters, and urge liberty of opinion as the very occasion for conformity to some one harmless and reasonable opinion authorized by the national Church of which all must be members. Departure from such a course would mean political danger. There are wide differences to be found in the individual men of the later group, and between each of them and Hooker, but they are differences in the emphasis which each, according to his temperament and surroundings, placed upon specific features of this plan. Some, for instance, emphasized the fact that opinions cannot be fettered, and they for this reason are sometimes carelessly termed liberalists, while others emphasized the necessity for conformity and the political danger arising from lack of it. But in all, if their arguments are followed to their conclusions, the general plan is the same and bears a marked resemblance to that followed by Hooker.

His first step was to make clear the distinction between the essentials and the non-essentials of belief. Certain things there were, he said, touching "points of doctrine, as for example, the Unity of God, the Trinity of Persons, sal-

⁸ Hooker, Works, I, p. xix. Editor's preface.

vation by Christ, the resurrection of the body, life everlasting, the judgment to come, and such like, they have been since the first hour that there was a Church in the world, and till the last they must be believed."⁹ Moreover, these necessary things were so plainly set down in Scripture, he held, that no one, even men of "no deep capacity," could here fall into error.¹⁰ But beliefs essential to salvation were only a portion of what the Church taught and not at all the chief things over which men for the most part were quarreling. Their controversies were upon such things as the kind of church government, whether by bishops or by presbyters, the form of baptism, the dress of the clergy, set forms of prayer, decoration of Churches, et cetera. Such things, he held as a second part of his plan, ought not be urged as necessary to salvation; they were "accessary and appendant only."¹¹ For answer to the accusation that the English Church ought in these things to have followed the changes made by the reformed Churches on the Continent, he said that ceremonies were matters indifferent and that it was of no importance if the Church of England did differ in their form from those on the Continent.¹² He also lamented the fact that his own nation should be torn with dissensions over "trifles," when "there is indeed store of matters fitter and better a great deal for teachers to spend time and labor in!"¹³ In his eighth book is the following very striking passage: "As opinions do cleave to the understanding, and are in the heart assented unto, it is not in the power of any human law to command them, because to prescribe what men shall think belongeth only to God."¹⁴ But whether it is as he left it, or has received some of Jackson's "polishing," we cannot know. It has the ring of the time when this part of Anglican doctrine received more emphasis than Hooker gave it.

⁹ Bk. III, Ch. X, 7.

¹⁰ Pref., Ch. III, 2.

¹¹ Bk. III, Ch. III, 4.

¹² Bk. IV, Ch. XIII, 3.

¹³ Bk. IV, Ch. XII, 8.

¹⁴ Bk. VIII, Ch. VI, 5.

But such liberality as even these milder statements present is only one aspect of his attitude toward "opinions." Ready as he was to grant that agreement here was impossible, he firmly maintained that the disagreement among people of any one national State must be in thought only. Differences of opinion must not be expressed: much less were they to be acted upon to the alteration of established practices. On no point of his plan for peace did he lay more stress than on this, and nowhere was his language more vehement. For to him, if each man in doubtful points followed his own interpretation on the ground that it was "revealed" to him by God, the Spirit, as he said, would seem to become but a shield for anarchy.¹⁵

Therefore, although he did not wish men to do anything "which," as he said, "in their hearts they are persuaded they ought not do," yet he continued in the further development of his plan, "this persuasion ought . . . be fully settled in their hearts; that in litigious and controverted causes of such quality" [i. e., where absolute certainty was impossible] "the will of God is to have them do whatsoever the sentence of judicial and final decision shall determine, yea, though it seem in their private opinion to swerve utterly from that which is right."¹⁶ "For if God," he held, "be not the author of our refusal, but of our contentment to stand under a definitive sentence; without which almost impossible either we should avoid confusion, or ever hope to attain to the truth." Abiding by a definitive sentence in such cases was not only following out in religious matters the acknowledged rule in civil matters. It was a recognition of the jurisdiction, which he defined as the power imposed on the necks of men in order to secure it for the good of others, and to restrain their own particular appetites

¹⁵ Pref., Ch. VI, 3.

¹⁶ Bk. V, Ch. LXII, 16.

At this phase of his argument its practical application becomes apparent. Jurisdiction must have an agent for its exercise. That agent in religious matters was the Church, a term which he very carefully defined. He admitted its signification as a spiritual body including all believers, but in the whole of the "Ecclesiastical Polity" he used "Church" in its narrower, concrete sense to indicate, as he explained, a "visible society of men." Here he stopped in his definition to distinguish a "society" from an "assembly" to which the name Church was sometimes applied, but which was more properly, he maintained, only a thing belonging to a Church, since an assembly, when the purpose for which it met was ended, was dissolved, while a Church remained always in being. "A Church was then," he continued, "a Society; that is, a number of men belonging unto some Christian fellowship, the place and limits whereof are certain. That wherein they have communion is the public exercise of such duties as those mentioned in the Apostles' Acts, 'instruction, breaking of bread, and prayer.'" He cited as examples of such "Societies," "the Church of Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, England."¹⁹ That wherein the Church exercised jurisdiction was not in the deciding of what was necessary to salvation; such things were all plainly set down in Scripture. Jurisdiction was exercised by the making of laws and canons expressive of the church polity, and "the matters wherein church polity is conversant," he explained, "are the public religious duties of the Church, as the administration of the word and sacraments, prayers, spiritual censures, and the like. To these the Church standeth always bound. Laws of polity are laws which appoint in what manner these duties shall be performed."²⁰ "The mutual fellowship and society one with another" which such laws regulated for all the members of any one Church was, he believed, most necessary for the preserva-

¹⁹ Bk. III, Ch. I, 14.

²⁰ Bk. III, Ch. XI, 20.

tion of Christianity.²¹ Different Churches such as the Church of Geneva or the Church of England might indeed have different laws with regard to the same ceremonial but within any single Church all its laws must be obeyed by all its members.²² Any other plan, he said, would take away "all possibility of sociable life in the world" for "the public power of all societies is above every soul contained within the same societies."²³ That there might be within England itself several such societies each with its own jurisdiction and laws, Hooker never for a moment admitted or even discussed. To him Dissenters were recalcitrant members of the Church. "God," he said, "hath appointed some to spend their whole time principally in the study of things divine, to the end that in these more doubtful cases their understanding might be a light to direct others."²⁴ When their opinions through the action of the representative bodies of the Church, synods, councils, etc., became laws, they must bind all. "That which the Church," he declared, "by her ecclesiastical authority shall probably think and define to be true or good, must in congruity of reason overrule all other inferior judgments whatsoever."²⁵

Hooker did not feel that thus overruling private opinion was making men do anything "which," to use his words, "in their hearts they thought they ought not do." Submission to church authority as he described it did not to him mean blind obedience. Of that he spoke with horror. "For men," he said, "to be tied and led by authority, as it were, with a kind of captivity of judgment, and though there be reason to the contrary not to listen to it, but to follow like beasts the first in the herd, they know not, nor care not, whither, this were brutish."²⁶ This sentence reveals the main point in his argument and strikes the key-

²¹ Bk. III, Ch. I, 14.

²² Bk. IV, Ch. XIII, 7.

²³ Bk. I, Ch. XVI, 5.

²⁴ Pref., Ch. III, 2.

²⁵ Bk. V, Ch. VIII, 2.

²⁶ Bk. II, Ch. VII, 6.

note to what liberalism he possessed. In his view, two things there were which should guide individuals even in their yielding to authority, namely, the law of God as plainly expressed in Scripture, and the law of reason.²⁷ Reason was to him the supreme gift of God to man. In the old days of the prophets "Revelation" had been a source of knowing God. But now the common way, the way "extending itself unto all that are of God," was reason.²⁸ In his "Answer" to Travers he thus carefully defined reason as he used it, the reason "which under no pretence in the world be disallowed"—"not mine own reason . . . but true, sound, divine reason, reason whereby those conclusions might be out of St. Paul demonstrated [referring to what they were discussing] and not probably discoursed of only; reason proper to that science whereby the things of God are known; theological reason, which out of principles in Scripture that are plain, soundly deduceth more doubtful inferences, in such sort that being heard they neither can be denied, nor anything repugnant unto them received, but whatsoever was before otherwise by miscollecting gathered out of darker places, is thereby forced to yield itself, and the true consonant meaning of sentences not understood is brought to light, this is the reason which I intended."²⁹

Reason in this sense was the groundwork, the hope of his entire plan for bringing peace to England. With it on the one hand he proclaimed his liberalism; uncomprehended force was not to prevail, men were to use their own powers of thinking. It was highly probable, he contended, that laws which had received the public approbation of the whole Church were good, or they would not have been so received.³⁰ However, since they were of human origin, they could be changed; not lightly, nor because some other form might happen to please the fancy, but when they were shown to

²⁷ Bk. I, Ch. XVI, 5.

²⁸ Pref., Ch. III, 10.

²⁹ Answer, 24.

³⁰ Pref., Ch. VI, 6.

result in some "manifest iniquity."⁸¹ Then, he declared, "one demonstrative reason alleged" outweighs the decision of even "ten thousand general councils."⁸² In this case nothing was greater than the individual. With "reason" also on the other hand he defended his system of uniformity; if proved reasonable, it ought not be gainsaid. Obedience, then, he thought was the necessary result of psychological law. "An argument," he explained as if quoting an axiom, "necessary and demonstrative as such, as being proposed unto any man and understood, the mind cannot choose but inwardly assent."⁸³

Thus Hooker led down to the concrete case he had in hand. The desire of his Presbyterian opponents as expressed in their sermons, tracts, admonitions to Parliament and the like was to change the polity of the national English Church so as to accord more fully with the Calvinistic regime to which many of them had grown accustomed on the Continent. Hooker steadfastly believed that no such changes were necessary. The changes in themselves, he held, might be harmless, but other conditions had led to other church forms in England and since the latter had become laws by public approbation, they were the deeds of the whole body of the Church, the deeds as much of those who wished them changed as of their defenders.⁸⁴ Only proof of iniquity in them could justify the change demanded. That there could not be found such proof based upon reason as he had defined it, it was his purpose to make clear by writing his eight books "Of Ecclesiastical Polity." Through them he thought all controversy on the subject would be brought to an end. Thus he expressed his hope in his Preface addressed to the Dissenters: "Nor is mine own intent any other in these several books of discourse, than to make it appear unto you that for the ecclesiastical laws of this

⁸¹ Bk. I, Ch. XVI, 2.

⁸² Pref., Ch. VI, 6.

⁸³ Bk. II, Ch. VII, 5.

⁸⁴ Pref., Ch. V, 2.

land, we are led by great reason to observe them, and ye by no necessity bound to impugn them. It is no part of my secret meaning to draw you hereby into hatred, or set upon the face of this cause any fairer glass than the naked truth doth afford; but my whole endeavor is to resolve the conscience, and to show as near as I can what in this controversy the heart is to think, if it will follow the light of sound and sincere judgment, without either cloud of prejudice, or mist of passionate affection."⁸⁵

The details of Hooker's defense of his Church's polity do not concern us here. It is his reasoning as given above by which he arrived at his conclusions and his purpose in arriving at them that are of interest to us in finding out why he and the later men opposed toleration in the sense in which we now understand it. Change or diversity in their polity according to his view there ought not to be. Changes in non-essentials, he granted, were allowable, but only when by certain proof it was shown that existing forms were productive of evil. With patient deliberation he had taken up in his great book every possible phase of the existing Anglican forms, and, to his own satisfaction, and as he steadfastly believed, to that of others, showed that in them no proof of evil results could be found. Therefore that polity could not rightfully be changed. But why were not changes matters of indifference to him? What were the sins of which he considered the sectaries guilty? What were the dangers in which he thought religious changes would result? To me his arguments point conclusively to political fear as the source of his resistance to any change in, or variation from, the one Established Church. Unfortunately this particular point in which we are most interested is taken up at length in the late and somewhat doubtful eighth book, but even in the earlier five books evidence on it is not lacking. The casual references there to dangers resulting from al-

⁸⁵ Pref., Ch. VII, I.

lowing freedom to the sectaries reveal dangers which in our day would be considered as of a State rather than of a Church. Fear of strifes and of the results of unrestrained license was repeatedly expressed. It were better, he said, that, as with the judges of ancient Israel, a wrong sentence definitive should stand until reversed by the authority which made it, than that strifes concerning any matter "should have respite to grow and not come speedily unto some end."³⁶ He condemned the sectaries for opposing such a rule, for they, he said, "by following the law of private reason, where the law of public should take place, breed disturbance."³⁷ Passion in this case was the element most to be guarded against, since it was apt through the earnestness which it bred in men to mislead many. "Most sure it is," he declared, "that when men's affections do frame their opinions, they are in defence of error more earnest a great deal, than (for the most part) sound believers in the maintenance of truth apprehended according to the nature of that evidence which Scripture yieldeth."³⁸ That evidence as we have seen was reason, and contentions, he held, among men who were not led by reason, but "whose minds are of themselves as dry fuel, apt beforehand unto tumults, seditions and broils" were especially dangerous.³⁹ He thus referred to the Anabaptists at the time of the Reformation: "When they and their Bibles were alone together, what strange fantastical opinion soever at any time entered into their heads, their use was to think the Spirit taught it them."⁴⁰ "These men at the first," he continued, "were only pitied in their error, and not much withstood by any; the great humility, zeal, and devotion which appeared to be in them, was in all men's opinion a pledge of their harmless meaning . . . by means of which merciful toleration they

³⁶ Pref., Ch. VI, 3.

³⁷ Bk. I-XVI, 6.

³⁸ Pref., Ch. III, 10.

³⁹ Bk. V, Ded. to Archbishop, Works, I, p. 291.

⁴⁰ Pref., Ch. VIII, 7.

gathered strength, much more than was safe for the state of the commonwealth wherein they lived. They had their secret corner meetings and assemblies in the night, and people flocked unto them by thousands."⁴¹ Here Hooker thought was a chance for treason to grow. In speaking of such assemblies in England he said, "It behoveth that the place where God shall be served by the whole Church, be a public place, for the avoiding of privy conventicles, which covered with a pretence of religion may serve unto dangerous practices . . . the only thing which maketh any place public is the public assignment thereof unto such duties."⁴² Yet more plainly did he emphasize his belief that the State must take account of religious conditions. "The safety of all estates," he affirmed, "dependeth upon religion; that religion unfeignedly loved perfecteth men's abilities unto all kinds of virtuous services in the commonwealth."⁴³ Further, causes of divisions in commonwealths, "such as rise from variety in matter of religion are not only the farthest spread, because in religion all men presume themselves interested alike; but they are also for the most part hotlier prosecuted and pursued than other strifes."⁴⁴ On the other hand, when necessity for change or relaxation in church laws was under consideration he held that "public utility is with very good advice judged at least equivalent with the easier kind of necessity."⁴⁵ Again, as we have seen, he believed that to disobey church laws which reason had proved not repugnant to God's law, was to disobey God. The commonwealth too, he affirmed, in referring to the punishment of religious innovators, had no need of men who had not learned to obey.⁴⁶ If it were established "that attempts for discipline without superiors are lawful" would not the next question among them be, he asked the sectaries, "what may

⁴¹ Pref., Ch. VIII, 9.

⁴² Bk. V, Ch. XII, 2.

⁴³ Bk. V, Ch. I, 5.

⁴⁴ Ded. to Archbishop, Bk. V, Works, I, 290.

⁴⁵ Bk. V, Ch. IX, 1.

⁴⁶ Bk. V, Ch. LXXXI, 11.

be attempted against superiors which will not have the sceptre of that discipline to rule over them?"⁴⁷ Men holding such views he thought must inevitably become enemies of their civil superiors. To protect the State in its religious aspect and the Church in its civil aspect, the same authorities must in a measure preside over both. Hooker tried to make his opponents see the inconsistency of their denial of his position on this point by referring to the university authorities whose power even they would leave untouched. "Your laws," he said, "forbidding ecclesiastical persons utterly the exercise of civil power must needs deprive the heads and masters of the same colleges of all such authority as they now exercise."⁴⁸ The greatest example, of course, of the double functions in the hands of one man was the king's supremacy over the Established Church, concerning which Hooker wrote: "There is . . . a power of ecclesiastical dominion, communicable, as we think, unto persons not ecclesiastical, and most fit to be restrained unto the Prince or Sovereign commander over the whole body politic:—the eighth Book we have alloted unto this question."⁴⁹

It is interesting to look for a moment at some of the passages in this eighth book, even as it has come down to us, to see how his conception of the connection between Church and State, which was evident in the earlier books, is there enlarged upon and emphasized. They were in England, he affirmed, but one and the same body. "Truth of religion" was the attribute which denominated a society of men, a "Church." The Church of England had this "truth of religion," hence his deduction: "We hold, that seeing there is not any man of the Church of England but the same is also a member of the commonwealth; nor any man a member of the commonwealth, which is not also of the Church of England; therefore, as in a figure triangular

⁴⁷ Pref., Ch. VIII, 13.

⁴⁸ Pref., Ch. VIII, 3.

⁴⁹ Pref., Ch. VII, 6.

the base doth differ from the sides thereof, and yet one and the selfsame line is both a base and also a side . . . one and the selfsame multitude may in such part be both, [Church and State] and is so with us, that no person appertaining to the one can be denied to be also of the other."⁵⁰ Of their respective importance, he said, "even as the soul is the worthier part of man, so human societies are much more to care for that which tendeth properly unto the soul's estate. than for such things as this life doth stand in need of . . . so in all commonwealths things spiritual ought above temporal to be provided for."⁵¹ Of the connection of both to the king, he proudly declared, "our estate is according to the pattern of God's own ancient elect people, which people was not part of them the commonwealth and part of them the Church of God, but the selfsame people whole and entire were both under one chief Governor on whose supreme authority they did all depend."⁵²

The authority of kings might be derived in either of two ways, but in each, was divine. Rarely, as among the Jews in the Old Testament times, they were chosen directly by God. In this case there was no doubt that their power was by divine right.⁵³ Generally, however, God left nations free to choose for themselves rulers and the manner of their ruling. Such choice having taken place, they on whom power is thus "bestowed even at men's discretion, they likewise do hold it by divine right."⁵⁴ Thus it was in England. But there, although the king held his power by divine right, he could not exercise it absolutely in the making and enforcing of laws. For, said Hooker, "Laws they could never be without consent of the whole Church, which is the only thing which bindeth each member of the Church."⁵⁵ All must join in the making of them—laity and clergy together

⁵⁰ Bk. VIII, Ch. I, 2.

⁵¹ Bk. VIII, Ch. I, 4.

⁵² Bk. VIII, Ch. I, 7.

⁵³ Bk. VIII, Ch. II, 5.

⁵⁴ Bk. VIII, Ch. II, 6.

⁵⁵ Bk. VIII, Ch. VI, 11.

with the highest power, the king.⁵⁶ Hence all laws, ecclesiastical as well as civil, rightly originated in Convocation and Parliament. For, he explained, "The Parliament of England together with the convocation annexed thereto, is that where upon the very essence of all government within this kingdom doth depend; it is even the body of the whole realm; it consisteth of the king, and of all that within the land are subject to him, for they are all there present, either in person or by such as they voluntarily have derived that personal right unto."⁵⁷

How much of the emphasis in this book upon the connection between Church and State and upon the power of the king may have been due to later editors, we cannot tell. However, I take the main ideas to be Hooker's, for they are highly consonant with the contents of the earlier books and form fit conclusions to the arguments there expressed. What part Hooker's fear of political disaster as a result of religious disturbance may have had in creating a similar fear in the minds of the later churchmen is another question. The most emphatic expression of that fear, the eighth book, could have had but little direct influence on them, since they could have known of its contents only through hearsay or through the work of the occasional copyists. A more important consideration is whether men trained to such conceptions of a Church and its laws as Hooker had set forth, conceptions which became the orthodoxy of the next generation, would not inevitably, under the conditions prevailing just before the Civil War, have felt, as he did, that those laws must be unalterably and uniformly binding in order to preserve the State. To me they could have thought little else. Given his idea of an indivisible society of men calling itself at once a Church and a State, with a single head to conserve both interests, they also must have arrived at his conclusion as to the danger to the State from lack of

⁵⁶ Bk. VIII, Ch. VI, 8.

⁵⁷ Bk. VIII, Ch. VI, 11.

unity in the Church. At least, they all did reach that conclusion, and defended it by arguments similar to his. Since they were influenced very little by one another, and only indirectly by Hooker's strongest statements in regard to his fears, it must have been to their general cast of thinking that he contributed most. How large his contribution was, the following analysis of their ideas on subjects similar to those he treated will disclose.

CHAPTER III.

DOCTRINAL LIBERALISM.

The most pleasing feature of the Anglican clergy was their doctrinal liberalism. We have seen this trait in Hooker; in the later group of men it was emphasized still more, for as the differences between the various sects became more pronounced and their rivalry and opposition grew more determined, the need for a peace basis became more apparent. The need could be met by the first half of the Anglican program. Here their vision was clearer than that of their opponents. They saw that in themselves the points in dispute were minor things for which people ought not risk graver issues. Accordingly they laid yet firmer stress on the separation of articles of belief into essentials and non-essentials.

Notice first their statements of the essential facts of the Christian faith. Chillingworth, writing as he did in defense of Protestantism against Catholicism is very explicit in his statement of them. His argument in regard to them constitutes his main defense of the separation from the older Church, and of the existence of the various types of Protestant belief. The Apostles Creed he alleged "as sufficient, or rather more than sufficient summary of the points of faith which were necessary to be believed actually and explicitly."¹

He put it yet more simply in his answer to the Jesuit's query as to "*How of disagreeing Protestants, both sides may hope for Salvation?*" viz "That they are to use their best endeavors to believe the Scripture in the true sense, and

¹ Religion of Protestants, Answer, I, par. 16.

to live according to it. This if they perform (as I hope many on all sides do) truly and sincerely, it is impossible but that they should believe aright in all things necessary to Salvation; that is in all those things which appertain to the Covenant between God and man in Christ; for so much is not only plainly but frequently contained in Scripture. And believing aright touching the Covenant, if they for their part perform the conditions required of them, which is sincere obedience, why should they not expect that God will perform his promise, and give them Salvation?"³

Taylor's statement of them was very similar. "Allowing for these differences in 'Matters of doubtful disputation such as are the distinguishing articles of most of the sects of Christendom,' unity," therefore, he explained, "is to be estimated according to the unity of faith, in things necessary, in matters of creed, and articles fundamental."³ In other words, "the article upon which Christ built his Church was only St. Peter's creed, which was no more than this simple enunciation 'We believe, and are sure that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,' and to this salvation particularly is promised."⁴ All the longer creeds are simply explanations of this main article "as besides that Christ is come, they tell from whence, and to what purpose; and whatsoever is expressed, or is, to these purposes, implied, is made articulate and explicate in the short and admirable mysterious creed of St. Paul: 'This is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe, in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' This is the great and entire complexion of a Christian's faith, and since salvation is promised to the belief of this creed, either a snare is laid for us, with a purpose to deceive us, or

³ Ibid., Answer to Preface, par. 26.

³ Liberty of Prophesying, Epis. Ded., CCCXCVIII-IX.

⁴ Liberty of Prophesying, Sect. I, par. 3.

else nothing is of prime and original necessity to be believed but this, 'Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.'"⁵

Naturally, with this view of the fundamentals, he held that the longer creeds produced by the early church councils only elaborated and explained yet further this main article of faith. Moreover, their decisions were merely human and might contain errors. Taylor, himself, believed that the decisions of these earlier councils were correct; yet he condemned as altogether unjustifiable, Athanasius's "damnatory appendix" against those whose views of the Trinity differed from his own. Athanasius was led to take this step, Taylor thought, in order to frighten his enemies and gain friends; "but that," said Taylor, "does not justify the thing. For the articles themselves, I am most heartily persuaded of the truth of them, yet I dare not say that all that are not so, are irrevocably damned; because '*citra hoc symbolum*' the faith of the Apostles' Creed is entire."⁶

Hall, too, with his soundly practical view of life, denounced the polemical disputes of his day as "for the most part vile and unlearned." Heaven was to be obtained not by contests and disputes but "by faith and a godly life." "The Articles of Faith which are necessary to be believed by every Christian in order to his salvation, are but few, nor are they difficult to be understood."⁷

Hales is even more practical in his definition of a Christian: "two parts there are that do compleatly make up a Christian man, a true faith, and an honest conversation. The first, though it seem the worthier, and therefore gives unto us the name of Christians, yet the second, in the end, will prove the surer . . . so that a moral man, so called, is a Christian by the surer side."⁸ He even quoted with no anger but with much unspoken leniency the opinion held by

⁵ Ibid., par. 4.

⁶ Ibid., Sect. II, par. 36.

⁷ Works, VII, 295.

⁸ Works, II, 69.

some of the "antients" "erroneously doubtless," he put in parenthesis, that these moral men were not only "not far from the kingdom of heaven" but had "even saving grace, so far forth as to make them possessors of his kingdom." "Let it not trouble you," he assured his hearers, "that I intitle them to some part of our Christian faith and therefore without scruple to be received as weak and not to be cast forth as dead." Faith, he explained, quoting from Salvianus, "is nothing else, but faithfully to believe Christ, and this is to be faithful unto God which is nothing else but faithfully to keep the commandments of God. . . . Now," he argued, "all those good things which moral men by the light of nature do, are a part of God's will written in their hearts; wherefore so far as they were conscientious in performing them (if Salvianus his reason be good)," and it is evident Hales thinks it is, "so far have they title and interest in our faith."⁹ Many pagans, he added, have possessed all the glory of martyrs. "For the crown of martyrdom fits not only on the heads of those who have lost their lives, rather than they would cease to profess the name of Christ, but on the head of everyone that suffers for the testimony of a good conscience, and for righteousness sake." "And here," he said with an evident note of bitter irony, "I cannot pass by one very general gross mistaking of our age," namely, in regard to the "signs" by which "we may know a man to be one of the visible company of Christ, we have so tied ourselves to this outward profession, that we know no other virtue in a man, but that he hath conned his creed by heart, let his life be never so profane, we think it argument enough for us to account him within the pale and circuit of the church" while on the other hand men whose morals are good are utterly cast out. "So," Hales sarcastically concluded, "that the thing which in an *especial refined dialect* of the new Christian language signifies nothing but morality

⁹ Works, II, 70-71.

and civility, that in the language of the Holy Ghost imparts true religion."¹⁰

Laud's statement of the fundamentals is strikingly simple and direct. "As Christ epitomizes the whole law of obedience into these two great commandments—the love of God and our neighbors: so the apostle epitomizes the whole law of belief into these two great assents: 'That God is: and that he is a rewarder of them that seek Him';—that seek Him in Christ."¹¹ The "fundamentals," he affirmed, were all that could be taught as absolute truth, for in them "the whole universal Church neither doth nor can err."¹² "She [the Church] can teach the foundation, and men were happy if they would learn it, and the Church more happy would she teach nothing but that, as necessary to salvation; for certainly nothing but that is necessary."¹³

These are clear statements of the things necessary to be believed in order to reach Heaven: that God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that love Him; the covenant between God and man in Christ; that Christ is the son of the living God, and that he rose from the dead; that man's duty is to endeavor to believe the Scripture in its true sense and to live according to it; to have a true faith and an honest conversation, the latter the surer mark of a Christian; and finally, to love God and one's neighbor. Few men ever have reduced the Christian's duty to simpler terms than these.

But in addition to the fundamentals of faith, Christians held many opinions on matters religious, but not essential to salvation. In these unnecessary things their opinions might with entire safety be different. In their arguments in support of this position these men show themselves most clear-sighted and liberal. That they express their views in order to justify keeping people within the pale of the national Church, does not impair the truth of their arguments

¹⁰ Works, II, 72.

¹¹ Works, II, 403.

¹² Works, II, 77.

¹³ Works, II, 412.

so far as they extend. It is here that the Renaissance had touched them most. It is here that we find the most beauty in their writings and that we love to linger.

Perhaps the most eloquent among them in defense of the tolerant attitude of the Anglican Church toward the weaker brethren within her ranks was Jeremy Taylor, who wrote, as we have seen, when the country was being rent into hostile camps because of these minor points of belief. The whole sum of his argument, he said in the dedication to the "Liberty of Prophesying," "is nothing but the sense of these words of scripture, that since we know in part, and prophesy in part, and that now we see through a glass darkly; we should not despise nor condemn persons not so knowing as ourselves."¹⁴

Again, with profound truth he explained, "so long as men had such variety of principles, such several constitutions, educations, tempers, and distempers, hopes, interests, and weaknesses, degrees of light and degrees of understanding, it was impossible all should be of one mind."¹⁵ Moreover, he declared that God "by propounding many things obscurely, and by exempting our souls and understandings from all power externally compulsory,"¹⁶ had thereby issued to us the liberty to follow our own interpretation of Scripture.

"Now," he argued, "because some doctrines are clearly not necessary, and some are absolutely necessary, why may not the first separation be made upon this difference and articles necessary be only urged as necessary, and the rest left to men indifferently, as they were by Scripture indeterminately?"¹⁷ This was an argument against, as well as for the sectaries then in England. For them he urged tolera-

¹⁴ Liberty of Prophesying, Epist. Ded., CCCXCVIII.

¹⁵ Works, VII, 440, Liberty of Prophesying, Introduction.

¹⁶ Liberty of Prophesying, Epist. Ded., CCCCV.

¹⁷ Ibid., CCCCI.

tion of differences in opinion, on the ground that they were acting in good faith, and, although differing from him, might be right in their conclusions. "For it is a hard case that we should think all Papists, and Anabaptists, and Sacramentarians to be fools and wicked persons."¹⁸ But thus tolerant himself, he imperatively demanded that others be equally lenient; a need which the persecution of the Episcopal clergy by the victorious sectaries was then rendering most evident. One of the greatest evils of the age, declared he, was not so much that every man had his own opinion, but that he insisted that his own salvation and that of others depended on its acceptance.¹⁹ For men to quarrel over matters however important they might be, if not necessary to salvation, was "trifling and toyish."²⁰ And for men to go even farther and persecute others for disagreeing in opinions "which they cannot, with sufficient grounds, obtrude upon others necessarily, because they cannot propound them infallibly, and because they have no warrant from Scripture so to do":²¹ this was to him contrary to the whole teaching of the Bible and to the spirit of Christianity. He referred here to the articles of belief and practice concerning which the Scriptures do not speak clearly and definitely, and in the interpretation of which, therefore, as he took half the book to prove, the early church fathers, councils, popes, anyone, in fact, may reasonably err. Toleration of these minor differences was to depend wholly on their good or bad practical effect. Of the greater question, respect for the religion of others no matter how widely different from one's own even in what one considers essential, namely, of toleration in its present meaning, Taylor had no conception whatever. "I deny not," he plainly declared, "but certain

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., CCCC.

²⁰ Liberty of Prophesying, Sect. II, par. 26.

²¹ Liberty of Prophesying, Epist. Ded., CCCC.

and known idolatry, or any other sort of practical impiety with its principiant doctrine, may be punished corporally, because it is no other but matter of fact, but no matter of mere opinion, no errors that of themselves are not sins, are to be persecuted or punished by death or corporal inflictions. This is now to be proved."²³

Then there follow in the treatise other reasons why "mere dissenters," those who hold the main facts of Christianity and lead good lives, are not to be punished corporally for errors in opinion on disputable points.

2. It is very easy for man to be deceived in such disputable points, no one is infallible. "No man pretends to it but the Pope, and no man is more deceived than he is in that very particular."²³

3. Since it is so easy to be mistaken, we may fight against God himself by persecuting the true believer.

4. A man who persecutes another simply prepares for his own persecution when the latter gets power into his hands.

In rooting out supposed evil-doers we are certain to tear out the good also.

5. Few could escape if all who err must be punished. "We are not only uncertain of finding out truths in matters disputable, but we are certain that the best and ablest doctors of Christendom [among the early fathers] have been actually deceived in matters of great concernment; . . . But then if these persons erred, and by consequence might have been destroyed, what should have become of others whose understanding was lower, and their security less, their errors more, and their danger greater? At this rate all men should have passed through the fire; for who can escape when St. Cyprian and St. Austin cannot?"²⁴

6. If a man is in error, it is stupid to give him the glory

²³ Liberty of Prophesying, Sect. XIII, par. 2.

²⁴ Ibid., par. 3.

²⁵ Ibid., par. 8.

of martyrdom, which only strengthens and does not destroy a cause. "It is certainly an argument of a great love, and a great confidence, and a great sincerity, and a great hope, when a man lays down his life in attestation of a proposition . . . [such a course] gives a hearty testimony that the person is honest, confident, resigned, charitable, and noble. And I know not whether truth can do a person or a cause more advantages than these can do to an error."²⁵

7. "It is unnatural and unreasonable to persecute disagreeing opinions. Unnatural; for understanding, being a thing wholly spiritual, cannot be restrained, and therefore neither punished by corporal afflictions." . . . It is unreasonable for a man because he has the physical power, to force another to believe as he does. . . . "As if he that can kill a man, cannot but be infallible: and if he be not, why should I do violence to my conscience because he can do violence to my person?"²⁶

8. Force, besides being able to do no good, may do much harm; it may make men hypocrites, but never true believers.

9. "It is one of the glories of the Christian religion, that it was so pious, excellent, miraculous, and persuasive, that it came in upon its own piety and wisdom, with no other force but a torrent of arguments and demonstration of the Spirit; a mighty rushing wind to beat down all strongholds, and every high thought and imagination; but towards the persons of men it was always full of meekness and charity, compliance and toleration, condescension and bearing with one another. . . . That precept which it chiefly preaches in order to all the blessedness in the world, that is, of meekness, mercy and charity, should also preserve itself and promote its own interest. . . . And it would be a mighty disparagement to so glorious an institution, that in its principle it should be merciful and humane, and in the promotion and propagation of it so inhuman."²⁷

²⁵ Ibid., par. 9.

²⁶ Ibid., par. 10.

²⁷ Ibid., par. 12.

10. "And if yet in the nature of the thing it were neither unjust nor unreasonable, yet there is nothing, under God Almighty, that hath power over the soul of man, so as to command a persuasion, or to judge a disagreeing." The will and even more the understanding are beyond external control.²⁸

Such sentiments as these are liberal indeed, and unsurpassed even in our own day. Granting that Taylor did apply them narrowly by fitting them into his idea of a comprehensive Church, it is still his great and lasting honor to have felt and believed them. Taken alone they are final truth; he had reached that goal intellectually, but outer circumstances prevented his doing so practically. His own unconsciousness of the inconsistency of his attitude is well illustrated by his ending his plea for more charity by telling a story which he had read in the "Jews' books." As Abraham sat watching by his tent, a very aged and infirm man came by, seeking hospitality. Abraham received him kindly, as was his custom, but when the old man began to eat without asking God's blessing, and, when questioned, said that he worshiped the fire only, Abraham with pious zeal turned him out into the darkness and danger of a desert night. But soon God appeared unto Abraham, and rebuked him, saying, "I have suffered him these hundred years although he dishonored me, and couldst not thou endure him one night when he gave thee no trouble?" Whereupon Abraham called the old man back. "Go thou and do likewise," said Taylor to his hearers, "and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham."²⁹ But this legend, which is direct and human and loving, implies, and perhaps Taylor subconsciously felt it, a wider charity than other parts of his treatise, as we shall see, will admit. The old fire-worshiper disbelieved the fundamentals.

²⁸ Ibid., par. 13.

²⁹ Liberty of Prophesying, Sect. XXII, par. 3.

Chillingworth divided the non-essentials about which men might differ into three groups:

1. Those "not at all mentioned in scripture."
2. When "the contrary belief may be about the sense of some place of scripture, which is ambiguous, and with probability capable of divers senses; and in such cases it is no marvel, and sure no sin if several men go several ways."
3. Cases "wherein scripture may . . . with great probability be alleged on both sides."⁸⁰

His reason for allowing differences is given in words remarkably similar to those of Taylor already quoted. "It is impossible," he affirmed, "but that by reason of variety of tempers, abilities, education, and unavoidable prejudices, whereby men's minds are variously formed and fashioned, they do embrace several opinions, whereof some must be erroneous; to say that God will damn them for such errors, who are lovers of Him and lovers of truth, is to rob man of comfort, and God of his goodness; it is to make man desperate, and God a tyrant."⁸¹

Hall liked to compare religious belief to a house. In reply to those who put too much stress upon little things he said, "What monster is this of an opinion, that all truths are equal! that this spiritual house should be all foundation; no walls, no roof!"⁸² "Ritual observations," he informed them, "are not so much as tile and reeds; rather like some fane upon the roof; for ornament, more than use; not parts of the building; but not-necessary appendances."⁸³ What if there were errors in some of these things, what practical difference did it make? The best word in the language, he said, was "moderation," and in religion it meant (1) to rest in fundamental truths, clearly revealed, (2) to keep opinions within bounds, not imposing private men's conceits on whole Churches.⁸⁴ Like Chillingworth, he recognized

⁸⁰ Ans., I, par. 13.

⁸² Works, VII, 172.

⁸¹ Ans. to Pref., par. 26.

⁸³ Works, VII, 457.

⁸⁴ Works, VIII, 266.

that such "private men's conceits" must take differing forms. Therefore his advice was: "To compose our affections towards unity and peace, however our judgments differ in lesser verities. . . . That if we cannot bring our judgments to conspire in the same truth with others, yet we should compose our affections to all peace, to all tender respects and kind offices to our dissenting brethren. What if our brains be divers! yet let our hearts be one."⁸⁵

Laud, too, believed that the Church could not teach as absolutely true anything other than the fundamentals "for the Church," he said, "hath not this knowledge of all particulars, men, and conditions, nor can she apply the conditions to the men; and therefore cannot teach just how far every man must believe, as it relates to the possibility or impossibility of his salvation, in every particular."⁸⁶ Since knowledge in particulars depended upon the depth of the individual's spiritual insight, the gift of God alone, equal demands for truth from all men would be uncharitable. "For," he explained, "to whomsoever God hath given more, of him shall more be required; as well in belief as in obedience and performance. And the gifts of God . . . to particular men are so various as that for my part I hold it impossible for the ablest tongue that is to express it. . . . Nor will I take upon me to express that tenet or opinion, the denial of the foundation only excepted, which may shut any Christian, the meanest, out of Heaven."⁸⁷

These are emphatic statements of the fact that it is impossible to force a man to believe anything, that his own reason must give consent to what he accepts as truth, and that this faculty necessarily differs with the individual. It was a theory the logical result of which in its practical application was to be religious toleration and finally complete religious liberty. That these men gave expression to it at all, and that they did so honestly and sincerely, makes them the

⁸⁵ Works, VII, 470.

⁸⁶ Works, II, 412.

⁸⁷ Works, II, 402.

religious liberalists of their time. Chillingworth, Hall, Hales, and to some extent, Hooker, are commonly thus looked upon. Particularly is this true of Chillingworth. His definition of saving faith as an "honest endeavor to believe the Scripture in its true sense, and to live according to it" is often quoted in defense of his extreme liberality. A harsher judgment is more frequently held of Laud, and sometimes of Taylor. But, as has been shown, the views of all of them were in matters of belief equally liberal, those of Laud and Taylor as strikingly so as any expressed by Chillingworth. We shall now see within what limits this liberality of theirs was to be exercised.

CHAPTER IV.

A COMPREHENSIVE CHURCH.

Their doctrinal liberalism enabled these men consistently to urge their plan of a comprehensive Church; a Church co-extensive with the State and embracing in its membership all the citizens of the latter; a Church in which belief in the essentials as defined above should alone be required, and in which differences of opinion concerning minor points of doctrine should not be interfered with. Each of them, as we shall see, set forth with great earnestness the idea of such a Church. It formed the cardinal point of all their arguments.

Chillingworth, in his endeavor to convince the Jesuit of the essential unity of Protestants in matters of doctrine, emphasized very strongly the possibility among them of comprehension. In fact, he believed "one communion" among all Christians in the world were possible and much to be desired if Roman Catholics would only give up their fundamental errors and cease to compel others to agree with them in mistakes. But his opinion and that of the other men concerning the Roman Church will be taken up at length in a later chapter. He believed that, if possible, Christians in general ought to dwell together in "one communion." "One communion" to him meant, as he explained, a "common profession of those articles of faith, wherein all consent; a joint worship of God, after such a way as all esteem lawful; and a mutual performance of all those works of charity, which Christians owe one to another."¹ "And," he continued, "to reduce Christians to

¹ Ans., IV, par. 40.

unity of communion, there are but two ways that may be conceived probable: the one by taking away the diversity of opinions touching matters of religion; the other, by showing that the diversity of opinions, which is among the several sects of christians, ought to be no hinderance to their unity of communion."² The first method was preferable, but impossible, since "God hath authorized no man to force all men to unity of opinion." "Wherefore we think it best," he said, referring to the Church of England, "to content ourselves with, and to persuade others unto, an unity of charity, and mutual toleration."³ Such a plan, he thought, followed in one country or in all, would end discord. For, he said, "seeing the over-valuing of the differences among christians, is one of the greatest maintainers of the schisms of Christendom, he that could demonstrate, that only these points of belief are simply necessary to salvation, wherein Christians generally agree, should he not lay a fair and firm foundation of the peace of Christendom?"⁴ Lack of such peace and unity was, he held, not due, as the Jesuit asserted, to the initial separation of Protestants from Rome, but to the perverseness of men who will not, as he said, "be content that others should be, in the choice of their religion, the servants of God, and not of men; if they would allow, that the way to heaven is not narrower now than Christ left it, his yoke no heavier than he made it; that the belief of no more difficulties is required now to salvation, than was in the primitive church; that no error is in itself destructive and exclusive from salvation now, which was not then; if, instead of being zealous papists, earnest calvinists, rigid lutherans, they would become themselves, and be content that others should be, plain and honest christians; if all men would believe the scripture, and, freeing themselves from prejudice and passion, would sincerely endeavor to find the true sense of it, and live according to it, and require no

² Ans., IV, par. 39.

³ Ans., II, par. 85.

⁴ Ans., IV, par. 13.

more of others but to do so; nor denying their communion to any that do so, would so order their public service of God, that all which do so may, without scruple, or hypocrisy, or protestation against any part of it, join with them in it; who doth not see that seeing (as we suppose here, and shall prove hereafter) all necessary truths are plainly and evidently set down in scripture, there would of necessity be among all men, in all things necessary, unity of opinion? and, notwithstanding any other differences that are, or could be, unity of communion, and charity, and mutual toleration? by which means all schism and heresy would be banished from the world, and those wretched contentions which now rend and tear in pieces, not the coat, but the members and bowels of Christ, which mutual pride and tyranny, and cursing, and killing, and damning, would fain make immortal, should speedily receive a most blessed catastrophe."⁵ This sentence, although remarkably long, is certainly a plain and earnest plea for the widest sort of comprehension.

Taylor, too, described the ideal Christian community as consisting of men "believing in the same God, retaining the same faith, having the same hopes, opposed by the same enemies," but, because "their understandings are not all alike," holding differing opinions in certain "mysterious articles."⁶ He, however, still had about him a strain of mediaeval scholasticism which makes his further exposition of a comprehensive Church less free than that of Chillingworth. Accordingly he laid most emphasis on narrowing the definition of heresy, which alone could exclude an individual from communion with other Christians. Chillingworth had cast aside entirely all formal definitions. Taylor agreed with him in spirit, but, as we shall see, could not free himself altogether from the older methods of reasoning. No

⁵ Ans., III, par. 81.

⁶ Liberty of Prophecy, Sect. II, par. 26.

man, Taylor held, could be considered guilty of heresy "so long as the foundation is entire,"⁷ even though he err in a matter of so great importance as the nature of the Trinity, provided that his error was due to "his invincible and harmless prejudice . . . his weakness, . . . his education, his mistaken piety"; to anything in fact that had "no venom nor a sting in it."⁸ He felt that everything depended upon the attitude of the person in question. "A wicked person, in his error," he said, "becomes a heretic, when the good man in the same error, shall have all the rewards of faith. For whatever an ill man believes, if he therefore believe it because it serves his own ends, be his belief true or false, the man hath a heretical mind, for, to serve his own ends, his mind is prepared to believe a lie."⁹ "But if anything that is evil '*in genere morum*' did decline his understanding; if his opinion did commence upon pride, or is nourished by covetousness, or continues through stupid carelessness, or increases by pertinacity—then the innocency of the error is disbanded, his misery is changed into a crime and begins its own punishment."¹⁰ But if the error does not arise from these causes, "if it be not voluntary and part of an ill life, then because he leads a good life, he is a good man, and, therefore, no heretic: no man is a heretic against his will."¹¹ The only opinions which he found Scriptural authority for calling damnable were those which were "impious '*in materia practica*,' or directly destructive of the faith, or the body of Christianity; such of which St. Peter speaks: 'Bringing in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, these are the false prophets, who, out of covetousness, make merchandise of you through cozening words.' Such as these are truly heresies, and such as these are certainly damnable."¹² Men holding them, therefore, were neces-

⁷ Ibid., par. 12.

⁸ Ibid., par. 10.

⁹ Ibid., par. 22.

¹⁰ Ibid., par. 10.

¹¹ Ibid., par. 12.

¹² Ibid., par. 36.

sarily outside the pale of his ideal Christian community, the comprehensive Church. All those within it accepted the fundamentals, without which Taylor believed it impossible to live a good moral life. Irreligion was to him gross practical sin. Faith and good works were not to be distinguished by the Christian. "However, they may be distinguished," he declared, "if we speak like philosophers, . . . they cannot be distinguished, when we speak like Christians. For to believe what God hath commanded is in order to a good life; and to live well is the product of believing, and as proper emanation from it, as from its proper principle, (and)¹³ as heat is from fire."¹⁴ No one, he held, who believed the main facts of Christianity would fail to submit his understanding to God and to believe whatever God had taught.¹⁵ "God hath taken order that all rules concerning matters of fact and good life shall be so clearly explicated, that without the crime of the man he cannot be ignorant of all his practical duty."¹⁶ All who thus believed and lived according to their belief were, in Taylor's definition, properly within the bonds of Christian brotherhood.

The concord that ought to be among Christians who hope to meet in one Heaven was beautifully expressed by Hall. "If it must be with us," he said, "as with the Sava and Danube, two famous rivers in the east, that they run three score miles together in one channel, with their waters divided in very colour from each other; yet let it be as it is with them, without noise, and without violence."¹⁷ For, "this earth hath nothing more lamentable than the civil jars of one faith."¹⁸ Consequently he thought it was the duty of all men to draw

¹³ This "and," although given in the London editions of 1822 and 1844, is evidently a misprint.

¹⁴ Liberty of Prophesying, Sect. II, par. 8.

¹⁵ Ibid., par. 12.

¹⁶ Liberty of Prophesying, Sect. XIII, par. 2.

¹⁷ Hall, Works, VII, 471.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 185.

as near as possible to their Christian adversaries. By Christian adversaries he meant all those claiming to believe in the fundamentals. Even when their errors in minor points were of such a serious nature as really to counteract their profession of the fundamentals, provided also that the errors were held conscientiously and not contumaciously, he would not bar them from the Church or refuse to communicate with them. "God forbid," said he, "we should shut up Christian brotherhood in so narrow a compass, as to bar all misbelievers of this kind, out of the family of God."¹⁹ To his practical mind any other course was wasteful of energy. "The articles of faith," he exclaimed, "which are necessary to be believed by every Christian in order to his salvation, are but few, nor are they difficult to be understood. Oh, that the whole congregation of Christian people would learn to acquiesce in them with all humility and quietness; and not be too solicitous about other points; and that they would employ the remainder of their time in pious duties, and good works!"²⁰ A similar vein of thought is evident in a proposed censure which he wrote out and sent to his friend, Reigesbergius, concerning Arminius and his new opinions which were then causing a stir in Holland. "But grant," Hall pretended to say to Arminius, "that some of these are no less true, than nice points: what do these unreasonable crotchets and quavers trouble the harmonious plain-songs of our peace? Some quiet error may be better than some unruly truth. Who binds us to speak all we think? So the Church may be still, would God thou wert wise alone. Did not our adversaries quarrel enough before, at our quarrels? . . . By the dear name of our common parents, what meanest thou, Arminius? . . . For God's sake, either say nothing, or the same. How many great wits have sought no by-paths, and are now happy with their fellows? Let it be no disparagement to go with many to

¹⁹ Works, VII, 463.

²⁰ Works, VII, 295.

heaven."²¹ The poetic beauty of this letter, its convincingly earnest, and at the same time humorously ironical pleading, reveal the power which such a man as Hall possessed to bring about results satisfactory even to Laud.

John Hales was in his definition as to whom the comprehensive Church should include more liberal than any of his contemporaries or even than most modern men. He would include within it the so-called "moral men," whom, as we have seen, he called "Christians by the surer side." As to including those whom he classed as "weak," those not fully informed, or who possessed bad tempers, there could, he thought, be no doubt. He even saw benefits that might arise because of differences of opinion in cases where Scripture was ambiguous. Here he said the object ought not be so much "to establish an union of opinion in the minds of all," which to him was clearly impossible, "as to provide that multiplicity of conceit trouble not the church's peace."²² Such a provision was a possibility, he held, if thoughtful men would not be so ready to anathematize one another when they did not agree in opinion. Ignorant, passionate men who could not control themselves were not, according to his scheme, as we shall see in the next chapter, to discuss these doubtful points. Men of thoughtful type, men who were not "ambitiously minded everyone to be lord of a sect" but who on the contrary were content with "unity of spirit in the bond of peace," these men might profitably hold and teach opposite views on controverted points. There could be good on both sides. Both might freely [if peaceably] speak their minds.²³ But he did not stop with including in the Church men who held various opinions in "things indifferent, out of which no great inconvenience, by necessary and evident proof, is included" [others, as we have seen, were willing to go that far], but he would treat "even the same with the former," "him that is fallen into

²¹ Works, VII, 273.

²² Works, II, 95.

²³ Works, II, 95.

some known and desperate heresy," for "antiently," he said in proof of the justice of his liberality, "heretical and orthodox Christians, even in public holy exercise, conversed together without offence."²⁴ He thought there might certainly be devised a plan by which a similar course could be followed in his own country. Their divisions, he held, were mainly but schisms upon matters of opinion, things not maliciously invented, "but rather fallen upon through error and mistake" in which case, he said, "what we are to do, is not a point of any great depth of understanding to discover, so be distemper and partiality do not intervene. I do not yet see, that *opinionum varietas, et opinantium unitas*, are ἀσύστατα [inconsistent]; or that men of different opinions in Christian religion, may not hold communion *in sacris*, and both go to one church."²⁵

His own plan to make such wide comprehension practically possible was so to simplify the church service that all men, no matter what their differences of opinion, might conscientiously take part in it. He cited as an example one of the worst heresies known to the early Church. "Why may I not go," he questioned, "if occasion require, to an Arian church, so there be no Arianism expressed in their liturgy? And were liturgies and public forms of service so framed, as that they admitted not of particular and private fancies, but contained only such things, as in which all Christians do agree, schisms on opinion were utterly vanished. For consider of all the liturgies that are or ever have been, and remove from them whatsoever is scandalous to any party, and leave nothing but what all agree on; and the event shall be that the public service and honor of God shall no ways suffer: whereas to load our public forms with private fancies upon which we differ, is the most sovereign way to perpetuate schism until the world's end."²⁶

Such a simplification as he here proposed would have pro-

²⁴ Works, II, 96.

²⁵ Works, I, 126.

²⁶ Works, I, 127.

duced radical changes in the church services as then being elaborated by Laud. The only necessary things in a service, Hales held, were "prayer, confession, thanksgiving, reading of scriptures, exposition of scripture, administration of sacraments in the plainest and simplest manner . . ." nothing need be put in "either of private opinion, or of church pomp, of garments, of prescribed gestures, of imagery, of music, of matter concerning the dead, of many superfluities, which creep into the churches under the name of order and decency."²⁷ It is true that this expression of dissatisfaction with the Church as it was is found in his tract on schism, intended for private circulation only. Loudly to have demanded these changes would have been to his mind allying himself with the sectaries themselves.

Laud, himself, although he would draw the limits of the comprehensive Church more narrowly than these other men, was also thoroughly in favor of a Church which should not inquire too closely into matters of individual opinion. He pointed out to the Jesuits the unanimity existing among all Protestant Churches, as shown by their several confessions, in the main exceptions which they jointly took to the Roman Church. The Book of Articles he said did not contain all the public doctrines of the Church of England. That Church was not so narrow as to exclude anything which she acknowledged hers, nor did she willingly permit any crossing of her public declarations, yet, he explained, "she is not such a shrew to her children as to deny her blessing, or denounce an anathema against them, if some peaceably dissent in some particulars remoter from the foundations."²⁸ As we have seen, he believed that the fundamentals were all that could be known as absolute truth, and therefore all that the Church could teach as such. But in regard to other things, specific Churches, like the Greek, Roman, Anglican, did not have divine authority, because although "they deliv-

²⁷ Works, I, 127.

²⁸ Works, II, 59.

ered supernatural truths by promise of assistance," yet they were "tied to means." Therefore, he concluded, quoting Hooker,²⁹ "all the Church's constitutions are of the nature of human law."³⁰ Hence he willingly granted that absolute consent to every particular in them could not rightfully be required. This view of the nature of the oath requiring belief in the Thirty-Nine Articles by members of the Church of England, he fully explained in the following Answer which he gave to an order made by the Lower House of Parliament in 1629: "All consent in all ages, as far as I have observed, to an Article or Canon, is to itself, as it is laid down in the body of it; and if it bear more senses than one, it is lawful for any man to choose what sense his judgment directs him to, so that it be a sense *secundum analogum fidei*; and that he hold it peaceably, without distracting the Church; and this till the Church which made the article determine a sense. And the wisdom of the Church hath been in all ages, or the most, to require consent to Articles in general, as much as may be, because that is the way of unity; and the Church in high points requiring assent to particulars hath been rent, as *de transubstantiatione*."³¹ Deep was his grief when he saw it so rent in England. In his dying speech in 1644 he sorrowfully exclaimed, "poor Church of England! It hath flourished and been a shelter to other neighboring Churches, when storms had driven upon them. But, alas! now it is in a storm itself, and God only knows whether, or how it shall get out. And (which is worse than the storm from without) it is become like an oak cleft to shivers with wedges made out of its own body; and at every cleft, profaneness and irreligion is entering in, while (as Prosper speaks in his 2d book, 'De Contemptu Vitae,' cap. 4) 'men that introduce profaneness are cloaked

²⁹ Ec. Polity, Bk. III, Ch. IX, Sec. 2; Works (Keble), I, p. 481.

³⁰ Laud, Works, II, 77.

³¹ Works, VI, pt. I, 12.

over with the name, *religionis imaginariae*—of imaginary religion.' For we have lost the substance, and dwell too much in opinion; and that Church which all the Jesuits' machinations could not ruin, is fallen into danger by her own."⁸²

These Anglican clergy felt the storm coming and desired to avert it by means of their plan of comprehension, according to which what later became the "wedges" could, they thought, even with their differences, have remained a part of the parent stock. But perhaps the restrictions to be placed upon the outward expression of their differences of opinion would have been too much for the heated minds of that time to have borne. Those restrictions which were to have preserved the peace in the comprehensive Church we shall now examine.

⁸² Works, IV, 434.

CHAPTER V.

CONTROL WITHIN THE COMPREHENSIVE CHURCH.

Although variety of opinion in minor matters was to be tolerated within the comprehensive Church, each of these men felt that measures must be taken to prevent the too rapid increase of such variety and to keep the peace among such men as were apt, if unrestrained, to attempt to force their views upon others. It was in the number and manner of such restraints that the members of our group differed most. Here it was that each of them revealed most plainly the natural drift of his temperament; but never for a moment did the liberality of even the most broad-minded of them lead him to question the necessity of restraint. This significant fact becomes most clearly apparent when their schemes for control within the Church are examined by arranging them according to the natural tendencies of their authors, ending with the most lenient.

Laud had the least faith in unaided individual discretion. To him many safeguards were a necessity. We have seen that he believed that the fundamental truths of Christianity were few and simple, and that they alone were all that the Church could teach absolutely; that he thought that belief in the Articles of religion ought to be demanded in a general and not a particular sense, thus allowing room for individual differences. He also admitted that "an intelligent man, and in some things unsatisfied might modestly propose his doubts to the Church."¹ But, he insisted, "it must be with modesty, and for finding out or confirming of truth, free from vanity and purposed opposition."² Further than this, for a

¹ Works, II, 154.

² Works, II, 155.

man, instead of holding his opinion "privately within himself," "boldly and publicly to affirm it,"³ "to follow his private judgment before the whole congregation" was indeed, he said, quoting Saint Bernard, "*lepra proprii consilii*, the proud leprosy of a private spirit."⁴ He emphatically denied having taken any step whatever toward acknowledging as man's inherent right the exercise of private judgment. How he consistently could make such a denial, and yet allow men to doubt even for a time the truth of doctrinal statements concerning the non-essentials, it is difficult to see. Reason taught him the necessity of liberalism, but his fixed idea of the danger from lack of religious unity prevented his allowing reason full sway. Hence he held that the exercise of individual judgment must be only in the cases of "intelligent persons" and on "undetermined points." Upon this matter he clearly expressed himself in the controversy with the Jesuit, Fisher. In trying to turn Laud's arguments back upon him, Fisher had said that Laud seemed not to admit of private judgment, which according to Fisher, "would open a gap to all enthusiasms, and dreams of fanatical men." Laud, referring to this statement of Fisher's, said, "Now for this I thank him. For I do not only seem not to admit, but I do most clearly reject this frenzy in the words going before."⁵ Denial of the power of the Pope to decide controversies, he argued in reply to Fisher, did not in any way mean "to leave this supreme judicature in the hands and power of every private man, that can read Scripture, or else allow no judge at all, and so let in all manner of confusion." "No," he continued, "God forbid that I should grant either; for I have expressly declared that Scripture, interpreted by the Primitive Church, and a lawful and free General Council determining according to these, is judge of controversies; and that no private man whatsoever is or can be judge of these."⁶ The Church and its legitimate

³ Works, II, 60.⁴ Works, II, 154.⁵ II, 87.⁶ II, 427.

organs had been created for man's assistance; hence, "no man may expect inward private revelation without the external means of the Church" unless perhaps it be a "case of necessity" such as that of ship-wrecked persons, etc.⁷ But, speaking of his own day, he said, "weak and ignorant men's outrunning both God and his Church, is as bold a fault now on all sides, as the daring of the times hath made it common."⁸ For such to be the condition, he held, was altogether wrong, since "private spirits are too giddy to rest upon Scripture, and too heady and shallow to be acquainted with demonstrative arguments." In his opinion "it were happy for the Church if she might never be troubled with private spirits till they brought such arguments."⁹ Terrible indeed to him seemed the inevitable outcome of an unrestrained exercise of private judgment. He saw clearly that the unity which he considered so necessary would then quickly vanish. "For," he exclaimed, "if every man may preach as he list, though he pretend the law and the gospel, too, Jerusalem will be quickly out of 'unity in itself.' And if they leave coming to the 'ark and testimony,' the world will soon have as many differences in religion, as there be young, ignorant, and bold priests in parishes."¹⁰

To prevent such a consummation, the authority of the Church must be obeyed. Although, as we have seen, he admitted that her laws were of the fallible nature of human laws, that her councils could err, and men, consequently, could peaceably dissent from their decisions until the wrong be righted by another council, yet he maintained that these facts did not in the least abrogate her authority. "Now, the Church," he said, "is never more cunningly abused, than when men, out of this truth, That she may err, infer this falsehood, That she is not to be obeyed. For it will never follow: She may err,—Therefore, she may not govern. For

⁷ Works, II, 86.

⁸ Works, II, 252.

⁹ Works, II, 272.

¹⁰ Works, I, 75.

He that says, 'Obey them which have rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls;' commands obedience, and expressly ascribes rule to the Church. And this is not only a pastoral power, to teach and direct, but a praetorian also to control and censure too, where errors or crimes are against points fundamental or of great consequence.¹¹ In the last clause his liberalism cropped out again, with the distinction so often noticed. "Of great consequence" might, however, be broadly interpreted. Because of her controlling, censorial power, he said, in another place, "the prophets and governors of the Church are called *custodes*, 'keepers,' 'watchmen,' and 'over-seers.' And they must watch as well over her peace as her truth."¹² And it was for her ultimate peace, as he thought, that his own untiring, most unrelaxing efforts were put forth.

Taylor believed in a course of ecclesiastical control which was almost equally stringent. We have seen how tolerant he was where errors concerned ideas only, where no practical grievances were involved. In such cases the persons were not heretical, and not to be punished. But when ideas had or might have dangerous results, he believed the utmost diligence ought to be exercised. Persons holding such ideas were guilty of heresy. Even in its worst forms, as we have seen, he did not think heresy punishable with death, yet he did not believe that it ought be allowed to grow, for to him there must inevitably flow from it some sort of crime. To prevent such a result he would through the Church check the pernicious idea. He proposed the following plan:

"But although heretical persons are not to be destroyed, yet heresy, being work of the flesh, and all heretics criminal persons, whose acts and doctrine have influence upon communities of men, whether ecclesiastical or civil, the governors of the republic or church respectively, are to do their duties in restraining those mischiefs, which may happen to

¹¹ Works, II, 286-7.

¹² Works, I, 167.

their several charges, for whose indemnity they are answerable. And therefore, according to the effect or malice of the doctrine or the person, so the cognizance of them belongs to several judicatures. If it be false doctrine in any capacity and doth mischief in any sense, or teaches ill life in any instance, or encourages evil in any particular . . . 'these men must be silenced,' they must be convinced by sound doctrine, and put to silence by spiritual evidence, and restrained by authority ecclesiastical, that is, by spiritual censures, according as it seems necessary to him, who is most concerned in the regiment of the church. For all this we have precept, and precedent apostolical, and much reason.¹³ But," he continued, "such public judgment in matters of opinion must be seldom and curious, and never but to secure piety and a holy life."¹⁴ By "such public judgment" he referred to spiritual censure alone—"no Christian man, nor community of men may proceed farther. For if they be deceived in their judgment and censure, [which, by the way, could only be in *non-essentials* according to Taylor] and yet have passed only spiritual censures, they are totally ineffectual, and come to nothing; there is no effect remaining upon the soul, and such censures are not to meddle with the body so much as indirectly."¹⁵

He seems never for a moment to have doubted the efficacy of such censures, never to have doubted but that men readily would yield when confronted with the evidence of sound doctrine. He was not ignorant of the fact that there were godless men in the world. But in his arguments here he was speaking only of those who became heretical through a harmful interpretation put upon a doubtful part of Scripture, that is, upon a non-essential. He was speaking here only of those within the Church, those who accepted the fundamentals, those whom he has described before as will-

¹³ Liberty of Prophesying, Sect. XV, par. 1.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., par. 2.

ing "to submit their understandings to God and to believe whatever he had taught."¹⁶ Such men were willing to accept God's teaching provided they knew what it was, but here they had failed in their interpretation. They must, therefore, he thought, be corrected in their views, to prevent the wrong idea from spreading and becoming a "foundation of sin." For then such an idea, he held, is "matter of fact in principle and persuasion, and is just so punishable as is the crime it persuades."¹⁷

The question at once arises as to what offense in the actual church activities Taylor would call a crime. Would, for instance, an interpretation of Scripture involving a minor variation in the service be a crime? Would it come under the general definition given above as something that 'resulted in mischief, that taught ill-life, or encouraged evil?' This of course, is a crucial question, and that Taylor and all of these men would for political reasons answer it in the affirmative it is the object of this study to prove. We can, however, follow that reasoning only gradually.

In the first place, adhering to such a variation involved disobedience to law and to one's recognized superiors. Taylor's view of such disobedience is best seen in his sermon preached in 1661 before the Irish Parliament at Dublin. But before quoting from it these views, it is well to examine it in other respects. The charge of insincerity has been brought against Taylor by those who maintain that he advocated toleration in 1647 from purely selfish motives, because he himself then belonged to the oppressed party, but that he gave up his liberal views on his restoration to favor and power under Charles II. The sermon in question was preached at this latter time. If one considers the whole of it, together with its dedication addressed to the bishops, when it was printed, one will find in it, I think, no departure

¹⁶ Liberty of Prophesying, Sect. II, par. 12.

¹⁷ Liberty of Prophesying, Sect. XIII, par. 2.

from the attitude expressed in 1647 in "The Liberty of Prophesying." It is a question again of remembering the two-fold nature of the scheme which all these men proposed, namely, toleration for the sake of enforcing uniformity. For the first part, take "The Epistle Dedicatory" prefaced to the published sermon of 1661, in which Taylor described those who were objecting to the rule he wished to establish in Ireland as persons who were "servants to a scruple, and affrighted at a circumstance, and in bondage under an indifferent thing, and so much idolators of their sect or opinion, as to prefer it before all their own nobler interests, and the charity of their brother, and the peace of a whole church and nation."¹⁸ He prayed that these men might be brought "to understand their own liberty, and that they may not, forever, be babes and neophytes, and wax old in trifles, and forever stay at the entrances and outsides of religion; and that they would pass '*in interiora domûs*,' and seek after peace and righteousness, holiness and justice, the love of God and evangelical perfections; and then they will understand how ill-advised they are who think religion consists in zeal against ceremonies, and speaking evil of laws."¹⁹ Here again are clearly the liberal ideas of "The Liberty of Prophesying," pointing, as those did, toward comprehension. There is also in his directions to the bishops the same category of ideas not to be tolerated because heretical, as we have just noticed from the earlier work. "If," he said, "weak brethren shall still plead for toleration and compliance, I hope my Lords the bishops will consider where it can do good, and do no harm; where they are permitted, and where themselves are bound up by the laws; and in all things where it is safe and holy, to labor to bring them ease and to give them remedy: but to think of removing the dis-

¹⁸ Taylor, Works, VI, Supplement, Sermon V, The Epist. Ded., CCCXXXVIII.

¹⁹ Ibid., CCCXLI.

ease by feeding the humour, I confess it a strange cure to our present distempers."²⁰ This is surely a practical illustration of his former plan for control within the comprehensive Church.

To return now to our former query as to how he would look upon an interpretation of Scripture involving a variation from an established ceremony of the Church, we have noticed that such an interpretation, although intrinsically unimportant, carried with it practical disobedience. To him obedience was in itself of more vital importance than the things for which in these cases a breach of it was risked. In the sermon itself of 1661 he took for his text, "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (I Sam. XV, 22-23). If Christ's example were followed, he said, "to obey was of itself a great instance of religion: and if ever religion comes to be pretended against obedience, in anything where our superior can command, it is imposture."²¹ Explaining the text, he said, "By sacrifice here, then, is meant the external and contingent actions of religion; by obedience, is meant submission to authority, and observing the command."²² Further, that "whatsoever is commanded by our superiors, according to the will of God, or whatsoever is not against it, is of necessity to be obeyed." If they should command what is against the word of God, what then? "Why nothing then, but that we must obey God, and not man; there is no dispute of that."²³ He gave in almost the same words as he had used in 1647, the following advice to be observed of men before deciding that a thing was against the word of God: "(1) Let such men think charitably of others, and that all are not fools or madmen who are not of the same opinion with themselves or their own little party.

²⁰ Ibid., CCCXL.

²¹ Works, VI, 344.

²² Ibid., 345.

²³ Ibid., 348.

(2) Let him think himself as fallible and subject to mistake as other men are. (3) But let him by no means think that every opinion of his is an inspiration from God; for that is the pride and madness of a pretended religion. . . . (4) Let him think his opinion to be uncertain."²⁴ Finally, "Let no man be too busy in disputing the laws of his superiors; for a man by that seldom gets good to himself, but seldom misses to do mischief unto others."²⁵ And again "for a private spirit to oppose the public, is a disorder greater than is in hell itself."²⁶ From this there is no doubt but that Taylor believed disobedience to church rules even on minor matters to be a crime. Hence according to the argument already given from "Liberty of Prophesying," he would put rigorous restraints upon the expression and propagation of ideas involving such disobedience.

Chillingworth's idea of church control is not far different from these views expressed by Laud and Taylor. The matter came up for discussion in his answer to the Jesuit's charge that the Protestant Church exacted obedience as stringently as did the Roman. His opponent, among other things, referred to the attitude of the Church of England toward the decision of a general council, and for proof quoted the assertion of Hooker concerning the necessity of standing by some definitive sentence. Chillingworth replied that "Hooker 'tho an excellent man, was but a man," and also that this statement of his concerned only yielding obedience to such a sentence, and not to accepting it finally as either just or true."²⁷ He, too, then quoted from Hooker a passage already referred to in Chapter II: "Although ten thousand general councils would set down one and the same definitive sentence, concerning any point of religion whatsoever; yet one demonstrative reason alleged, or one manifest testimony cited from the word of God himself to the

²⁴ Ibid., 351.

²⁵ Ibid., 355.

²⁶ Ibid., 357.

²⁷ Ans., V, par. 109.

contrary, could not choose but overweigh them all; inasmuch as for them to be deceived, it is not impossible; it is, that demonstrative reason, or divine testimony should deceive."²⁸ In giving his own opinion concerning the force of a conciliar decision, he first expressed his doubt as to the statement of his opponent regarding the attitude of the early Church. "The fathers of the church," said Chillingworth, "in after times might have just cause to declare their judgment, touching the sense of general articles of the creed: but to oblige others to receive their declarations, under pain of damnation, what warrant they had I know not. He that can shew, either that the church of all ages was to have this authority, or that it continued in the church for some ages, and then expired: he that can shew either of these things, let him: for my part, I cannot."²⁹ Thus did he dispute the authority of the Roman Church to demand belief in her decisions as infallible. The practice of the English Church with regard to councils was, he maintained, of a far different nature. For, continuing he said, "Yet I willingly confess the judgment of a council, though not infallible, is yet so far directive and obliging that without apparent reason to the contrary, it may be a sin to reject it, at least, not to afford it an outward submission for public peace sake."³⁰

In his denial that the English Church was as dogmatic as the Roman he also quoted the views formerly expressed on the subject by Dr. Potter. He acknowledged that Dr. Potter had granted the "necessity of peaceable external obedience to the declaration of the church, though perhaps erroneous": but provided always, Chillingworth was careful to put in by way of parenthesis, that it be in "matters not of faith, but of opinions or rites."³¹ He had in mind

²⁸ Quoted by Chill., Ans., V, par. 110.

²⁹ Ans., IV, par. 18.

³¹ Ans., V, par. 104.

³⁰ Ans., IV., par. 18.

both theory and practice. Men, he granted, "who by errors of this quality, disturb the church's peace" were to be condemned. Such condemnation, however, he affirmed was far different from denying, as the Romanists had done at the time of the Reformation, the right of men to oppose a Church erring in matters of faith. At the most, he maintained, the exaction of obedience by the Church of England concerned only non-essentials. And even here, he continued, a certain latitude was allowed. Dr. Potter, he said had, it was true, stated that in these lesser matters, "It is not lawful for any man to oppose his judgment to the public." But, continued Chillingworth with reference to Dr. Potter's words, "he [Dr. Potter] presently explained himself by saying not only that such a man may hold an opinion contrary to the public resolution, but besides that he may offer it to be considered of . . . provided he do it with great probability of reason, very modestly and respectfully, and without separation from the church's communion. It is not, therefore, in this case, opposing a man's private judgment to the public simply, which the doctor finds fault with; but the degree only and malice of this opposition, opposing it factiously," etc.²² This quotation, one will at once observe, and there is no doubt but that Chillingworth accepted its teaching, is almost in the words of Laud on this subject; his own interpretation of it strikes the note of Taylor with regard to controlling erring Christians.

Bishop Hall perhaps ought to come next in the arrangement of these men according to an ascending scale of leniency. We have seen that the Church as he would have it was to be very broadly comprehensive. Some idea of the kind of control which he thought ought to be exercised within it may be gathered from the following safe-guards which he thought ought to be observed by its authorities

²² Ans., V, par. 104.

in tolerating erring persons: “(1) That it be only in things good or indifferent.” By such, he meant “matters of ritual, and such as concern rather the decoration than the health of religion.” “It is fit,” he said, “that they should be valued accordingly. Neither peace nor friendship should be crazed for these in themselves considered.” “(2) That it be with a true desire to win them to the truth.” “(3) That we find ourselves so thoroughly grounded, as that there be no danger of our infection.” “(4) That we do not condescend to betray the least parcel of divine truth.” “(5) That if they are utterly incorrigible, leave them to just censure.”⁸³ Here again, the fourth time, is expressed a fear of the danger caused by the spread of erroneous ideas concerning the non-essentials. Here also is again the belief in the need of punishing those who wilfully persisted in their errors.

Hall expressed these same convictions even more strongly in his assertion of the right of the Church to formulate, and to demand compliance with some definitive understanding on what he calls the “collateral and not-mainly importing verities.”⁸⁴ His reasoning, as we shall see, was closely parallel to that of Chillingworth. Referring to the government of national Churches such as that of England, he said, “the several members of those particular Churches are bound, so far to tender the common peace as not to oppose such publicly received truths.”⁸⁵ In the Church of England the regular agent for the determination of such “understandings” was the synod. When the powers of this body were criticised by the Puritans, Hall in his usual matter-of-fact way answered: “Wherefore is a Synod, if not to determine?”

“But of things reputed indifferent? What else are subject to the constitutions of men? Good and evil are, either directly or by necessary sequel, ordered by God: these are above human power. What have men to do if not with

⁸³ Works, VII, 466-467. ⁸⁴ Works, VII, 288. ⁸⁵ Works, VII, 288.

things indifferent? All necessary things are determined by God; indifferent, by men from God, which are so many particulars, extracts from the generals of God. 'These things,' saith learned Calvin, 'are indifferent, and in the power of the Church.' Either you must allow the Church this or nothing."

"But these decrees are absolute:—What laws can be without a command? The law that ties not is no law."

"But for all men and all times?—How for all? For none I hope, but our own. And why not for them?"³⁶

To say, as some of them did, that for the synod so to act was equivalent to claiming infallibility, he declared somewhat bitterly, was foolish, and a "fit conclusion for a Separatist." On the contrary, decrees of the synod were made only about indifferent rites, which for decency and comeliness were to be used by those whom they concerned, and never were they made except with the following limitations:

"1. That they be not against the word of God.

"2. That justification, or remission of sins, be not attributed to them.

"3. That the Church be not troubled with their multitude.

"4. That they be not decreed as necessary, and not to be changed.

"5. That men be not so tied to them, but that, by occasion, they may be omitted, so it be without offence and contempt."³⁷

He likewise held that the Church had full power to put a ban upon anything which would hinder the peaceful working out of these decisions. Such a disturbing element, and much to be feared, was controversy over disputable points of doctrine.

"Disputation—counter-writing," he declared were "but bellows to increase the flame."

"There is no possible redress, but in a severe Edict of re-

³⁶ Works, IX, 433.

³⁷ Works, IX, 434.

straint to charm all tongues and pens, upon the sharpest punishment, from passing those moderate bounds, which the Church of England, guided by the Scriptures, hath expressly set; or which on both sides, are fully accorded on."

"If any man herein complain of an usurpation upon the conscience and an unjust servitude, let him be taught the difference, between matters of faith and scholastical disquisitions."³⁸

He feared that if people were allowed to talk of such things as much as they liked, the "peevishness and self-conceit of some crossed dispositions" might lead them to "blazon as sinful and heinous" the lawful commands of a Synod on indifferent matters, and thus occasion a "breach of the common peace." Thus over matters trivial in themselves there would arise, he thought, a "schism no less pernicious than heresy." For, he argued, "if my coat be rent in pieces, it is all one to me, whether it be done by a brier, or a nail, or a knife. The less the matter is, the greater is the disobedience, and the disturbance so much the more sinful."³⁹ Thus, his practical nature, his impatience with the niceties of "scholastical disquisitions," as he called them, upon theological trifles, his very liberalism in matters of doctrine, made him only the freer and readier to advocate a rigid system of control in order to preserve peace and unity within the Church.

The ideas of Hales upon this matter are so unusual as to merit being quoted at length. The remarkable clarity of his mind is nowhere more evident than here where he analyzed what men were wont to regard as authority. We have seen that his "Church" could, practically, be co-extensive with humanity, that he would include Arians, and even "moral men," as "Christians by the surer side." But like his four contemporaries, he too felt that control was essential. In one respect he went farther than they, for in his

³⁸ Works, IX, 826-7.

³⁹ Works, VII, 467.

plan the members of the Church were to be required to do certain things as well as to refrain from doing others. Passive acceptance of regulations was not sufficient.

The disturbance caused by the violent spirit with which the holders of various dogmatic opinions in religious matters insisted upon having their respective views recognized as the only right ones, he proposed at least partially to get rid of by lessening the number of such opinions. His method of doing so was two-fold. First, he would have men be more careful as to what they accepted as true, and then fight only for that. By this means he thought the greater part of the current subjects of dispute would disappear. Secondly, in cases where because of the ambiguity of Scripture or because the profound nature of the subject surpassed human comprehension, it was impossible really to arrive at final truth, he would deny to "weak" Christians the liberty of discussion. These men, he held, because of weakness due to various reasons, could not clearly distinguish truth from falsehood, and thus were the most likely of all men not only to fall into errors but also stubbornly to maintain them.

For the first part of his plan, viz., to make men more careful as to what they accepted as true, he put the strongest possible emphasis on the necessity of private judgment.

"Unto you, therefore," he said, "and to everyone of what sex, of what rank or degree, and place soever, from him that studies in his library, to him that sweats at the plough-tail, belongs this precept of St. Paul, 'Be not deceived.'"⁴⁰ And there is only one way, he continued, of not being deceived, and that is "to know things yourselves."⁴¹ What he later says about barring "weak" Christians from the discussion of intricate matters evidently did not appear to him as a limitation put upon the command 'Be not deceived,' but rather as a means of carrying it out. These weak ones were least liable to deception by being restrained from the

⁴⁰ Works, III, 150.

⁴¹ Works, III, 153.

pitfalls of discussions beyond their comprehension. Inconsistent though it seems to us they were still to exercise the right of judgment in what they believed. They were to be the taught, but not unless the teacher clearly showed the ground and reasons for the truth of what he taught. All men, he held, must know not only the "*what*" but the "*wherefore*" of belief. Moreover, the "*wherefore*" must not rest on what he called "the common hackney reasons which most men use in flattering themselves in their mistakes" which, he declared, are for the most part but "man's authority thrust upon us under divers shapes."⁴² "An infallibility," he held, "there must be, but men have marvelously wearied themselves in seeking to find out where it is."⁴³ It was absolute folly, he urged, to plead in extenuation of religious practices, "'thus we have been brought up, thus we have been taught;' or to antiquity, 'thus have been our antients delivered unto us;' or to universality, 'this hath been the doctrine generally received;' or to synods, councils, and consent of churches, 'this is the doctrine established by ecclesiastical authority;' all these are nothing else but deceitful forms of shifting the account and reason of our faith and religion from ourselves, and casting it upon the back of others."⁴⁴ Here Hales thought to strike the greatest blow at the sectaries. For it was one or another of these reasons that they were constantly quoting in defense of their doctrines as opposed to the Established Church. With all the relentlessness of his clear piercing logic he proceeded to show that none of these authorities are infallible, that they can not constitute absolute truth. He took them up one by one:

"Education and breeding," he said, "are nothing else but the authority of our teachers taken over from childhood, than which nothing is more credulous. . . . Yet, if it were known, this is probably the cause of most men's re-

⁴² Works, III, 162.

⁴³ Works, III, 149.

⁴⁴ Works, III, 161-2.

ligion." Quoting from Epicharmus, he warmly affirmed, "that the 'chiefest sinew and strength of wisdom is not easily to believe.'"

"Secondly, Antiquity, what is it else (God only excepted) but man's authority born some ages before us? Now for the truth of things, time makes no alteration; things are still the same they are, let the time be past, present, or to come. Those things which we reverence for antiquity, what were they at their first birth? were they false? time cannot make them true; were they true? time cannot make them more true."⁴⁵ The only antiquity which is "proper to truth and in which error can claim no part," is God himself, "for God is truth." All else has the chance of being error though it be as ancient "I say not as Inachus, but as Satan himself."⁴⁶ In the early days "all that were Christians were not saints." Again, in his Tract concerning Schism and Schismatics" he spoke in a tone of almost sarcastic raillery concerning the ancient fathers and their quarrels about the date of Easter. "If" he said "the discretion of the chiefest guides and directors of the church, did in a point so trivial, so inconsiderable, so mainly fail them, as not to see the truth in a subject, wherein it is the greatest marvel how they could avoid the sight of it; can we, without imputation of extreme grossness and folly, think so poor-spirited persons competent judges of the questions now on foot betwixt the churches? Pardon me, I know not what temptation drew that note from me."⁴⁷ This last note of apology for what he had just said throws an interesting light on that phase of Hales' mind which it is hardest to understand. From the other passages it is evident that he himself was convinced of the truth of his former statement; yet he had to bear in mind his correspondent [for this was a private letter] who might take it as an instance of careless disrespect and of wider application

⁴⁵ Works, III, 163.

⁴⁶ Works, III, 164.

⁴⁷ Works, I, 121.

than its author's own careful, discriminating, analytical mind had meant it. Clarendon⁴⁸ speaks of the fact that Hales had some startling opinions, but that he kept them to himself, for fear that though harmless to him, they might mislead others. This note is evidently one of them, perhaps one of the things which he afterward acknowledged were "more pleasant than needed."⁴⁹ When censured by Archbishop Laud for having written this tract, Hales answered him in a letter which on the face of it seems to have a far too subservient and yielding tone for a man of Hales' independent type. If there is danger of his tract having caused trouble, he said, he could wish it all "sponged" out. As to the facts expressed in it, he said, "If they be errors which I have here vented (as perchance they are) yet my will hath no part in them, and they are but the issues of unfortunate inquiry."⁵⁰ Then followed his vindication of his singleness of purpose in his lifelong pursuit of truth, quoted above.⁵¹ He did not say he had been mistaken, but that through human weakness, he might have been. It is the scholar's plea for wishing only to state the truth as he sees it, with no desire either to force it upon others, or to defend it from their attacks. As for his attitude toward antiquity: "In this point," he said to Laud, "my error, if any be, sprang from this; that taking actions to be the fruit by which men are to be judged, I judged of persons by their actions, and not of actions by the persons from whom they proceeded: for to judge of actions by persons and times, I have always taken it to be most unnatural."⁵² In other words he only used his common sense, and he not only defended his method, but re-stated his contention in regard to Easter over which Laud's criticism had arisen.

⁴⁸ Works, I-XI, Life.

⁴⁹ Works, I, 136.

⁵⁰ Works, I, 137.

⁵¹ Ch. I, 13.

⁵² Works, I, 139.

To return to the category of things which people are prone to allow to obscure the light of their own reason, he took up as a third point "universality"—it, he said, "is such a proof of truth, as truth itself is ashamed of; for universality is nothing but a quainter and a trimmer name to signify the multitude"—which is not only "human authority"—but the weakest part of that authority. "Could wishing do any good," he continued, "I could wish well to this kind of proof; but it will never go so well with mankind that the most shall be the best." The best that universality can do is to "serve as an excuse for error" but never as a "warrant for truth."⁵³

"Fourthly, Councils, and synods, and consent of churches, these indeed may seem of some force, they are taken to be the strongest weapons which the church had fought with; yet this," he continued, "is still human authority after another fashion."⁵⁴ He went on to prove how they rather distress than relieve the truth by allowing "the enemies thereof to see their own strength . . . to see that which for the most part is very true, that there are more which run against the truth, than with it."⁵⁵

So to conclude this part of his plan, that of making men careful as to what they accepted as the truth, they were all of them—high and low, ignorant and educated, to seek diligently and unceasingly for the truth, to know it themselves. They must not rely on what they perchance have been taught without first testing the wisdom of the teacher; they must not accept a thing simply because the early Church did so; they must not blindly follow the dictates of the majority; they must not bow dumbly before ecclesiastical authority as expressed in councils and synods. All this was to act like beasts and not like beings endowed with the intelligence which it was a sin not to use.⁵⁶

⁵³ Works, III, 164-5.

⁵⁴ Works, III, 166.

⁵⁵ Works, III, 165.

⁵⁶ Works, III, 151.

The second part of his plan for reducing the number of subjects about which people were apt to contend, was, as we have seen, by forbidding "weak" Christians to take part in discussions which would only mystify and confuse them to such an extent that they would form many false conclusions. These, their ignorance and narrowness would lead them stubbornly to defend and thus the increase of new matters of dispute would be unending. He divided "weak" Christians into four classes, and pointed out how each of them in some way came under the admonition in the text, "Him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations" (Rom., XIV, 1). His adaptation of this text so as to make it act as a check upon what he held to be the too-free handling of sacred themes in his day is most characteristic of Hales' whole attitude. The meaning of the text is, he acknowledged, "as if the Apostle's counsel had been unto us, to entertain with all courtesy our weaker brethren, and not over-busily to enquire into, or censure their secret thoughts and doubtings, but here to leave them to themselves, and to God who is the judge of thoughts; for many there are, otherwise right good men, yet weak in judgment, who have fallen upon sundry private conceits, such as are unnecessary differencing of meats and drinks, distinctions of days, or (to exemplify myself in some conceit of our times) some singular opinions concerning the state of souls departed, private interpretations of obscure texts of scripture, and others of the same nature: of these or the like thoughts, which have taken root in the hearts of men of shallow capacity, those who are more surely grounded may not presume themselves to be judges; many of these things of themselves are harmless and indifferent, only to him that hath some prejudicate opinion of them, they are not so; and of these things, they who are thus or thus conceited, shall be accountable to God, and not to man, to him alone shall they stand or fall; where-

fore, bear (saith the Apostle) with these infirmities, and take not on you to be lords of their thoughts, but gently tolerate these their unnecessary conceits and scrupulosities."⁵⁷ Nowhere can we find a more complete statement of the premises upon which religious toleration rests than this which Hales so freely and openly gave as the natural meaning of the text, the meaning, too, which he said the rest of the chapter confirmed. Yet he did not see fit to press this meaning. He felt that the process of the formation of such a multitude of differences was attended with dangerous results. Too many of the holders of these views were apt to have "some prejudicate opinion of them." To avoid this result, therefore, he thought that such persons ought not to be allowed the liberty of doing that whereby they could get wrong ideas. For this purpose he passed by the real meaning of the text, for a more literal interpretation of it which was applicable to his immediate need. He kept the tolerant attitude of the text in the matter of receiving and bearing with the infirmities of weaker brethren, but he thought one limitation was necessary—they must not discuss controverted points. Had he lived in 1689 I believe he would have kept the first interpretation. As it was, he said "Enlarge we the phylacteries of our goodness as broad as we list, give we all countenance unto the meaner sort, admit we them into all inwardness and familiarity; yet into disputations and controversies, concerning profounder points of faith and religious mysteries, the meaner sort may by no means be admitted. For give me leave now," he explained in reference to his attitude, "to take this [meaning the above quotation] for the meaning of the words [of the text] . . . First, because of the authority of sundry learned interpreters [heretofore he has put little faith in such authority]; and secondly, [his real reason] because it is very requisite that our age should

⁵⁷ Works, II, 57-58.

have something said unto it concerning this overbold intrusion of all sorts of men into the discussion of doubtful disputations. For disputation, though it be an excellent help to bring the truth to light, yet many times by too much troubling the waters, it suffers it to slip away unseen, especially with the meaner sort, who cannot so easily espy when it is mixed with sophistry and deceit."⁸⁸

The classes into which he divided "weak" Christians whom he would thus debar from discussion, and his reasons for doing so in each case were as follows:

1. Moral men, those having the practical virtues which Christianity teaches but not its doctrinal element. Into the hands of these men, he held, "having no supernatural quickening grace from above . . . it were folly to put the handling of the word of life at all" . . . and far less "the discussing of doubtful things in it."⁸⁹

2. Those who were true professors, but of profane and wicked lives. If these should write, the evil of their lives would infect their work, and thus throw discredit on the cause. "None but right good men should undertake the Lord's quarrels."⁹⁰

3. (a) Those not yet fully informed. (b) Those who were "weak by reason of some passion, or of some irritatory and troublesome humour in . . . [their] behavior."⁹¹

Into these two subdivisions he put the majority of weak Christians, and here it is that we find his chief reasons for curbing discussion: (1) The not fully informed would take offense at the dissensions raised by the discussion, and become "still more uncertain and unjointed in their faith."⁹²

(2) Really harmful designs might be thus started. No man was "too weak to do a mischief"; and "simple and unlearned souls, trained up by men of contentious spirits have

⁸⁸ Works, II, 57-58.

⁸⁹ Works, II, 73.

⁹⁰ Works, II, 83.

⁹¹ Works, II, 85.

⁹² Works, II, 89.

had strength enough to be the authors of dangerous heresies."⁶³ (3) Perhaps more to be feared than anything else was "the marvelous violence of the weaker sort in maintaining their conceits if once they begin to be opinionative,"⁶⁴ due, of course, in this case to jealousy of the wisdom of their superiors. Violence of a still worse sort was that of class (b), the men of passion: "from him it comes that our books are so stult with contumelious malediction."⁶⁵ His own opinion was, "if it be the cause of God which we handle in our writings, then let us handle it like the prophets of God, with quietness and moderation, and not in the violence of passion, as if we were possessed, rather than inspired."⁶⁶ The man of passion was apt to lose sight of the cause and write "not upon conscience of quarrel, but because he proposes to contend."⁶⁷

4. The last group of "weak" Christians consisted of those weak "through heretical and erring faith." The objection to their taking part in discussions was, he thought, self-evident. "That they have already unadvisedly entered into these battles, are they become that which they are: let us leave them therefore as a sufficient example and instance of the danger of intemperate and immodest meddling in sacred disputes."⁶⁸

Thus, to conclude, by teaching the strong how to exercise sound judgment, and by not allowing the weak to argue, did Hales hope to lessen the number of "opinions," and by so doing, to secure peace in the Church.

One will have noticed in the analysis of his ideas much that is strikingly different from anything we have found in the work of the other four men. He was, in fact, in many ways ahead of his time. Certainly he would not be an enemy to judicious higher criticism and scientific historical

⁶³ Works, II, 90.

⁶⁴ Works, II, 90.

⁶⁵ Works, II, 92.

⁶⁶ Works, II, 92.

⁶⁷ Works, II, 93.

⁶⁸ Works, II, 102.

methods. In some features his theology almost approaches what now characterizes the so-called Modernist school. Startling indeed to Laud, for instance, must have been Hales' statements about antiquity, universality, and the authority of councils. In natural tendencies no two men could be more opposite than these two—the extremes of conservatism and liberalism within our little group. How interesting would be the record of their conversation when Laud called Hales to him to question him concerning his views in the tract on "Schism and Schismatics." Nearly all day they paced the shady paths of Laud's well-kept garden at Lambeth, engaged in argument so earnest that when they returned to the house they were flushed and out of breath. Yet the conclusion could not have been unhappy, for in a few days Laud sent again for Hales, and, as a favor to himself, urged upon him the acceptance of the prebendary of Windsor. The common ground, shared by these two men and by the other three, was the practical side of church polity which we have been reviewing. Each of them believed in comprehension, and in such restrictive measures as would make that comprehension possible. They differed, as we have seen, as to just what those measures should be, but their object was always the same, peace within the Church.

We have noted the mournful beauty and yearning of the dying prayer of Laud, where he compared the state of the Church in 1644 to a storm-riven oak, "cleft in shivers with wedges made out of its own body, and at every cleft profaneness and irreligion entering in." Of the outcome of the storm's final ravages he was afraid to think. Hales' prayer at the close of a sermon on the text, "Peace I leave unto you: my peace I give unto you" (John, xiv, 27), has the same sorrowful earnestness: "Look down, O Lord," he cried, "upon thy poor dismembered church, rent and torn with discords, and even ready to sink. . . . Thou that

wroughtest that great reconciliation between God and man, is thine arm waxen shorter? Was it possible to reconcile God to man? To reconcile man to man is it impossible? Be with those, we beseech thee, to whom the prosecution of church controversies is committed, and like a good Lazarus drop one cooling drop into their tongues, and pens, too, too much exasperated each against other. And if it be thy determinate will and counsel, that this abomination of desolation standing where it ought not, continue unto the end, accomplish thou with speed the number of thine elect, and hasten the coming of thy Son, our Saviour, that he may himself in person sit, and judge, and give an end to our controversies, since it stands not in any human possibility."⁸⁹ In both of these prayers the other three men would have joined.

⁸⁹ Works, III, 27-28.

CHAPTER VI.

ATTITUDE TOWARD SEPARATION.

It is worth while to consider for a moment another side of the demand of the Anglican clergy that all Englishmen should belong to the Established Church. Roman Catholics accused them of inconsistency in that they denied to others with reference to the English Church, a right which they themselves together with all Protestants had exercised in leaving the communion of the Roman Church. By Laud, Chillingworth, and Hall this charge is taken up at some length. Together, their answers throw further light on the theory underlying the characteristic features of the English polity.

First, in their refutation, they maintained that the fault of breaking the unity of the universal Church at the time of the Reformation rested upon that Church and not upon those who left her communion. We have seen in the chapter on the doctrinal liberalism of the Anglican clergy that they believed that the obscurity of some parts of Scripture and the natural variations of the human mind made it psychologically impossible for all men to reach the same conclusions in regard to many of the less fundamental parts of Christian dogma. They, themselves, accordingly, would tolerate differences of belief in such matters. This fact, which formed, as we have seen, the cardinal feature of their defense of the comprehensive Church, also underlay their justification for having left the Roman communion. That Church had not been thus lenient. She had, as Protestants thought, made mistakes in some of her conclusions. That, however, in itself was not the occasion of their separation.

It was, as Chillingworth explained when the Jesuit asked why Protestants had left Rome, "not so much because you [Rome] maintain errors and corruptions, as because you impose them, and will allow your communion to none but to those that will hold them with you."¹ For them to have remained longer would have been to sin against conscience. "Unanimous concord in damned errors" was far less preferable than "difference of opinion touching points controverted." The latter condition the Anglican Church admitted. "It is better," he said, "for men to go to heaven by diverse ways, or rather by diverse paths of the same way, than in the same path go on peaceably to hell."²

Forced thus out of the Roman Church, they were careful to avoid similar errors themselves. They did not think their own conclusions in doctrine were wrong, yet they did not demand, as did Catholics, absolute and unquestioning acceptance of them. So also even those of their own members who unintentionally fell into errors of belief they did not condemn and cast out from among them. For, concerning them, he explained, "their points of variance were but few, and those not of such quality, but the error of them may well consist with the belief and obedience of the entire covenant, ratified by Christ between God and man. Yet I would not be so mistaken, as if I thought the errors even of some Protestants inconsiderable things, and matters of no moment . . . only this I say, that neither are their points of agreement so few, nor their differences so many as you make them; nor so great as to exclude the opposite parties from being members of the church-militant, and joint-heirs of the glory of the church-triumphant."³ "To you and your church we leave it," he said, "to separate Christians from the church, and to proscribe them from heaven upon trivial and trifling causes. As for ourselves, we conceive a charitable judgment of our brethren and their errors,

¹ Ans., V, par. 40.

² Ans., V, par. 72.

³ Ans., IV, par. 49.

though untrue, much more pleasing to God than a true judgment, if it be uncharitable; and, therefore, shall always choose (if we do err) to err on the milder and more merciful part, and rather to retain those in our communion, which deserve to be ejected, than eject those that deserve to be retained."⁴ They were not, he explained, by so doing, guilty of the same crime as if they had remained in the Roman Church. "It is more lawful for us," he said, "to communicate with them than you, because what they hold they hold to themselves, and refuse not (as you do) to communicate with them that hold the contrary."⁵

Since the Church of England was thus lenient, it followed on the other hand, that these disagreeing persons were not justified in their action if they themselves wished to forsake her communion. To do so was to become guilty of schism, which Chillingworth defined as "a causeless separation of one part of the church from another."⁶ Such a "causeless" separation, and the difference between it and that which Protestants had effected at the Reformation he explained by saying, "we say not that the communion of any church is to be forsaken for errors unfundamental, unless it exact withal either a dissimulation of them being noxious, or a profession of them against the dictates of conscience, if they be mere errors. This, if the church does (as certainly yours doth) then her communion is to be forsaken, rather than the sin of hypocrisy be committed. Whereas, to forsake the churches of protestants for such errors, there is no necessity, because they err to themselves, and do not under pain of excommunication exact the profession of their errors."⁷ Therefore, "neither for sin nor errors ought a church be forsaken if she does not impose and enjoin them."⁸

⁴ Ans., VII, par. 33.

⁵ Ans., V, par. 40.

⁶ Ans., V, par. 51.

⁷ Ans., V, par. 67.

⁸ Ans., V, par. 68.

When his opponent rejoined that the separatists, however, from the Church of England did use the same arguments in doing so that Luther had used on leaving Rome, Chillingworth replied: "True, they make the same answer, and the same defence as we do; as a murderer can cry not guilty, as well as an innocent person; but not so truly, nor so justly. The question is not what may be pretended, but what can be proved, by schismatics. They may object errors to other churches, as well as we do to yours; but that they can prove their accusation so strongly as we can, that appears not. . . . Give me now any factious hypocrite, who makes religion the pretence and cloak of his rebellion, and who sees not that such an one may answer for himself, in those very formal words which the holy apostles and martyrs made use of? [viz. 'Must obey God rather than men'] . . . good in apostles and martyrs, though it were obnoxious to be abused by traitors and rebels."⁹ Members of the Church of England, he said, had forever cleared themselves from the danger of such accusation justly made, because they granted their communion "to all who hold with them, not in all things, but things necessary; that is, such as are in scripture plainly delivered."¹⁰ Wherefore, he emphatically concluded, "a pretence of reformation will acquit no man from schism . . . we therefore say, that it concerns every man, who separates from any church's communion, even as much as his salvation is worth, to look most carefully to it, that the cause of his separation be just and necessary; for, unless it be necessary, it can very hardly be sufficient."¹¹

He was certain that in England such sufficient cause did not exist. Like Hooker, he believed in the general reasonableness of the principles of the Church of England. Differences, he said, had been unavoidable among Protestants on leaving Rome, and they had chosen different methods of reform. But "they did best that followed scripture inter-

⁹ Ans., V, par. 71.

¹⁰ Ans., V, par. 71.

¹¹ Ans., V, par. 53.

preted by catholic written tradition; which rule [as he was proud to say] the reformers of the church of England proposed to themselves to follow."¹² In testing their conclusions reason had been their constant guide. And, he affirmed, "To oppose a thing which reason points to as being in scripture . . . is to be obstinate against reason and therefore a sin."¹³ It was not so great a sin as denying the fundamentals, that is, things most clearly evident, but it was, nevertheless, a sin. Wherefore, anyone, except in so far as his private opinion was concerned, or such careful expression of it as we have seen above was to be allowed, who opposed the Articles of the Church of England was guilty of that sin.

Laud's arguments in this connection are much like Chillingworth's. They show perhaps even less severity. He, too, following Hooker, held that there were no real errors in the Church of England. Even the Jesuits, he said, had confessed as much with regard to her liturgy.¹⁴ But men, being human and weak, would, he admitted, nevertheless continue to differ about non-essentials. "It is no more, he said, "than they have done more or less, in all ages of the Church, and they may differ, and yet preserve the one necessary faith, and charity, too, entire, if they will be so well-minded."¹⁵ "For," he argued, "it is not every light error in disputable doctrine and points of curious speculation, that can be a just cause of separation in that admirable body of Christ, which is His Church, or of one member of it from another. For he gave the natural body to be rent and torn upon the cross, that His mystical body might be one."¹⁶ Quoting Saint Augustine, he said, "'that he is in no way partaker of divine charity, that is an enemy to this unity.'"¹⁷

¹² Ans., V, par. 82.

¹³ Ans., I, par. 13.

¹⁴ Works, II, 342.

¹⁵ Works, II, 400.

¹⁶ Works, II, 165.

¹⁷ Works, II, 165.

Again, "nor is he a Christian that would not have unity, might he have it with truth."¹⁸

This latter statement is the keynote to much that Laud said and did which caused his motives often to be misinterpreted. World-wide unity to him was the ideal state, provided, always, it could be "with truth." Out of it grew his theory of requiring assent to Articles in their general sense, not in particulars, as the Roman Church had done. If Rome had not done so, he said, had not made "so many things matters of necessary belief . . . Christendom, I persuade myself, had been in happier peace at this day, than I doubt, we shall ever live to see it."¹⁹ When charged by some with plotting to join Englishmen again to the older Church, he said, "if to reconcile them with the maintenance of idolatry, it were a damnable plot indeed." Such would be the case, in his view, as we know from his other writings, if union were to be effected with Rome, unchanged in her attitude. "But," he continued, in defense of his real wish, "if Christian truth and peace might meet and unite together, all Christendom over; were that a sin too? Were I able," he confessed, "to plot and effect such a reconciliation, I would think myself most happy, whatever I suffered for it."²⁰

But in his view, as we have seen, "unity with truth" within the Church of England was clearly possible. Since unnecessarily to break unity was sin, those who attempted to do so with regard to that Church were not good men. The reason, he explained, that "so many States and Churches are divided for and about Christ, and so are not at peace was because of the sin of men: they divide and tear Christ first, and then what wonder if they be divided about him?"²¹ This sin, as well as others, must be guarded against by practicing certain virtues. Those particularly needed were, in his opinion, quoting the words of the Apostle, "'humility'

¹⁸ Works, II, 150.

¹⁹ Works, II, 60.

²⁰ Works, IV, 320.

²¹ Works, I, 23.

(lowliness) at the heart; 'meekness' in the carriage; 'patience' (long suffering) in point of forbearance; and 'charity' (forbearing one another in love) whose work is supportation of the weak, that scandal be not taken, and 'unity' broken."²² "For," he continued, "there is no keeping of 'unity' in either Church or State unless men will be so temperate, when it comes to a jump at least, as to lay down the private for the public's sake, and persuade others to do the like."²³ In this manner all could aid in "keeping" unity. To use such a word as "keeping" in connection with unity was distasteful to him and in itself a sign of the disjointed nature of the times. Unity in its essence, he said, ought not need to be "kept," but was "very apt to hang together," since it proceeds from charity, which is the glue of the Spirit, not severed without violence."²⁴ But he had to admit with regret that in his day not only did unity not hang together of itself, but was not "kept"; "so many men were there who scattered the tares of schism and heresy."²⁵ That it should be preserved somehow, he felt that he could not urge strongly enough. No desire could have been more earnest or sincere. As he said in a sermon preached before Parliament, "I press 'unity' hard upou you:—pardon me this zeal. O that my thoughts could speak that to you that they do to God; or that my tongue could express them but such as they are; or that there were an open passage that you might see them, as they pray faster than I can speak for 'unity.'"²⁶

By no one of the group, however, was the breaking of the unity of the English Church by separation from it more roundly condemned than by Hall. As was usual with him, he pictured the whole situation aptly in a figure. "Of Churches faulty and corrupted," he said, "some raze the

²² Works, I, 172.

²³ Works, I, 167

²⁴ Works, I, 167.

²⁵ Works, I, 167.

²⁶ Works, I, 160.

foundation"; from such it was necessary to separate, as had been done by the reformed Churches at the Reformation. But other such Churches, he continued, "on a true foundation, built *timber, hay, stubble*": from these, which preserved the foundation, separation was sin. "For," said he, "Peter's rule is eternal: *Whither shall we go from thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life*: (John VI, 68). Where these words are found, woe be to us, if we be not found!"²⁷

There could be no possible doubt, he thought, but that the Church of England had builded on such a "true foundation." Therefore to leave her communion was to sin, for, in his definition, "He that leaves a particular Church, for appendances, is a schismatic."²⁸ The full tenor of his thoughts is very evident in a letter which he wrote to Mr. Smith and Mr. Robinson, the ringleaders of the Separatists who had withdrawn to Amsterdam. Its vigorous practicality, together with its deeply human note, reveals how earnestly he desired to lead men to peace. "This fault," he plainly said to them, "is past excuse, . . . your zeal of truth hath mislead you, and you others; a zeal, if honest, yet blind-folded and led by self-will. Oh, that you loved peace, but half so well as truth: then this breach had never been; and you that are yet brethren, had been still companions." The ceremonies on account of which they had left were, he said, mere "appendances." "If you take them otherwise," he continued, "you wrong the Church: if thus, and yet depart, you wrong it and yourself: as if you would have persuaded righteous Lot, not to stay in Zoar, because it was so near Sodom." And, added he, in his practical way, "you ought to oppose abuses, not to run away from them." . . . "it had been a thousand times better," he argued, "to swallow a Ceremony, than to rend a Church; yea, that even whoredoms and murders shall abide an easier answer than separation."²⁹ In another place, when again pleading with

²⁷ Hall, Works, IX, 387.

²⁸ Ibid., IX, 457.

²⁹ Works, VII, 171-173.

the Separatists, he reminded them that far greater errors than any they could complain of had not made purer and greater men than they leave the Church of which they were a part. "Look," he said, "into the black censures and bitter complaints of all the Prophets, and wonder that they separated not."⁸⁰ No, like Laud, he believed that the trouble lay not with the Church and her errors, but with those who complained of them. "Begin at home," he advised, "separate all self-love and self-will, and uncharitableness from your hearts; and you cannot but join with that Church from which you have separated."⁸¹ We may be faulty, he said, with reference to that Church, "but we are true."⁸² As to how little "faulty" they were in comparison with others, his opinion is best seen in the almost triumphant challenge contained in his "Apology to the Brownists." "Look," said he, "into our Confessions, Apologies, Articles: and compare them with any, with all other Churches, and, if you will find a more particular, sound, Christian, absolute profession of all fundamental truths, in any Church, since Christ is ascended into heaven, renounce us as you do, and we will separate unto you."⁸³ His faith that they could not do so led him to conclude his Apology with these solemn words: "Before . . . God and his blessed Angels and Saints, we fear not to protest, that we are undoubtedly persuaded that whosoever wilfully forsakes the Communion, Government, Ministry, or Worship of the Church of England, are enemies to the Scepter of Christ, and Rebels against his Church and Anointed."⁸⁴

Conclusions such as these reached by Chillingworth, Laud, and Hall expressed the conviction prevalent among the loyal members of the Church of England. It was a conviction strong and deep, one that had to end in action. Not for a

⁸⁰ Works, IX, 392.

⁸¹ Works, IX, 388.

⁸² Works, IX, 457.

⁸³ Works, IX, 428.

⁸⁴ Works, IX, 480.

moment would they allow a comparison between the earlier break with Rome and desertion from their own ranks. The case was in no wise the same. They held the foundation entire, and had not exacted obedience to wrong conclusions, hence with them, 'unity with truth' was a possibility and a necessity.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NECESSITY FOR NATIONAL CHURCH UNITY.

We come finally to a consideration of the reasons for insisting upon national unity within the Church of England. In searching for the causes which thus necessarily limited toleration to the allowance only of differences in minor matters of opinion within that single Church, an examination of the grounds upon which the arguments for unity are based clearly reveals that it was the prevalent opinion among the Anglican clergy that lack of such outward unity would mean disaster to the State. The keynote to their entire religious philosophy as outlined in the preceding chapters seems to me to be the connection which they believed to exist between these two institutions. The basis of this conclusion in the case of each of the men under consideration is now to be pointed out.

We have seen how strenuously Laud insisted upon unity in the Church. In his reasons for doing so, considerations of the necessities of the State are inextricably intertwined with those purely of religion. To him proper regard for the former was in itself an element of religion. The interests of Church and State were interchangeable. Only by combining his statements regarding both can we get his real attitude on either one. On the side purely of religion he said, "No man can rend the Church into sects, but he would have many Gods."¹ And again, "The ready way to out religion is to break the unity of it."² Or, to use his favorite figure, "Let the citizens [of the holy City of Jerusalem] break their unity once, they will spend so much time in quar-

¹ Works, I, 132.

² Works, I, 157.

rels, that they cannot build the City. No other times but when the inhabitants are at peace can build, no other time can keep them from waste."³ The fear underlying this warning stands clearly revealed only in a further development of this same favorite figure. "The breach of the unity of religion," he said in this instance, "will be sure to trouble the City [the Church] first, and hazard the State after. For the State, whether Pagan or Christian, hath ever smarted more or less as the Church hath crumbled into divisions. . . . So that no man can exhort unto, and endeavor for, the 'unity' of the Church, but at the same time he labors for the good of the State. . . . Unity not kept in the Church is less kept in the State. And the schisms and divisions of the one are both mothers and nurses of all disobedience and disjoining in the other."⁴ This was true, he explained, "by reason of the knot which God himself hath knit between the bodies, which is, that the same men, which in respect of one allegiance make the Commonwealth, do, in respect of one faith, make the Church, the walls of the State cannot be broken but the Church suffers with it; nor the walls and fences of the Church trampled upon, but the State must be corrupted by it; therefore the prayer is full, 'that peace may sit upon the walls,' that 'prosperity may fill all that is within them.'"⁵ The same thought is evident in his argument to prove that even in the light of mere expediency the most selfish of men was working against his own personal welfare when he allowed unity to be broken. "For if any man be so addicted to his private, that he neglect the common State . . . he wisheth peace and happiness to himself in vain. For whosoever he be, he must live in the body of the Commonwealth, and in the body of the Church, and if their joints be out, and in trouble, how can he hope to live in 'peace'? This is just as much as if the exterior parts

³ Works, I, 65.⁴ Works, I, 157.⁵ Works, I, 23-24.

of the body should think they might live healthful, though the stomach be full of sick and swollen humours.”⁶

Accordingly, when individuals insisted upon adhering to their own interpretations of religious questions to the extent of disturbing the peace of the Church by refusing to conform to some of its ceremonies, or, even more, when they wished to separate from it, he considered their offense not in the light of its intrinsic nature, but in that of its effect upon political relationships. For example, not to wish a railing to be placed around the communion table, was not a question of salvation of souls, not a sin in itself, but to refuse to worship when, at the king's command, one had been so placed, was disobedience to the king, defiance of his authority, treason. This view he expressed in one of the changes which he authorized to be made in the recasting of the Articles in 1635. The wording of the phrase “cut off the sect whose religion is rebellion” was changed to “who turn religion into rebellion.” Prynne complained of the change as an innovation; but Laud justified it “because,” he said, “if you make their religion to be rebellion, then you make their religion and rebellion to be all one. And that is against the ground both of State and the law. For when divers Romish priests and Jesuits have deservedly suffered death for treason, is it not the constant and just profession of the State that they never put any man to death for religion, but for rebellion and treason only?”⁷ Perfectly consistent with this attitude were the charges he made against those who resisted his attempts to enforce uniformity. Two sermons preached by students at Oxford were condemned as “seditious,” the one because it was concerning universal grace after the King's Declaration had forbidden the discussion of such abstruse subjects, and the other because it attacked in a “very bitter way” some ceremonies of the Church.⁸

⁶ Works, I, 28-29.

⁷ Works, VI, Pt. I, 53-54.

⁸ Works, V, pt. I, 287.

He considered the justice of his condemnation confirmed when on the following day he was informed by the vice-chancellor of the University that the sermon against ceremonies "was very base and factious and merely intended to make a party for the Scots."⁹ So real was this political fear that he sanctioned a search of the houses of recusants for arms, and showed much surprise when none were found.¹⁰ At the famous trial of Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton, in his charges against them he said, "'tis most apparent to any man that will not wink, that the intention of these men, and their abettors, was and is to raise a sedition, being as great incendiaries in the State (where they get power) as they have ever been in the Church."¹¹ Likewise on political grounds, and with the same fear of incipient treason he considered it extremely unwise to continue to tolerate the separate Dutch congregations. They kept so much to themselves; "upon which it needs must follow," he held, "that as they increase and multiply, they which are now a Church within a Church, will in time grow to be a kind of another commonwealth within this, and so ready for that which I hold not fit to express any further."¹² In his view schism was equivalent to sedition. Since the private religious gathering was the result of schism, that sedition should in time follow as a logical consequence seemed to him inevitable. Sedition was far too dangerous an evil to be allowed even the remotest encouragement. As he put it, "a sedition, or a schism, in a corner, in a conventicle, which is the place where they are usually hatched, will fire all if it be suffered."¹³

The ground of his opposition to the system of "no bishops" advocated by the Presbyterians was likewise political. "Libels against bishops," he held, "are against the

⁹ Works, V, pt. I, 288.

¹⁰ Works, V, pt. I, 296.

¹¹ Works, VI, pt. I, 42.

¹² Works, VI, pt. I, 26.

¹³ Works, I, 13.

king and the law, and can have no other purpose than to stir up sedition among the people.”¹⁴ The very existence of the kingship was threatened. “There is not a man,” he said, “that is for ‘parity,’—all fellows in the Church,—but that he is not for monarchy in the State.”¹⁵ To oppose monarchy was to wish to destroy one of God’s holy institutions. He was the very highpriest of the divine right of kings. His view is set forth at length in the “Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical,” as treated upon in 1640 by him and the Archbishop of York as presidents of the Convocations of their respective provinces:

“The most high and sacred order of kings is of divine right, being the ordinance of God himself, founded in the prime laws of nature, and clearly established by express texts both of the Old and New Testaments.”

“The care of God’s Church is so committed to kings in the scripture, that they are commended when the Church keeps the right way, and taxed when it runs amiss, and therefore her government belongs in chief unto kings.”

“For any person or persons to set up, maintain, or avow . . . under any pretext whatsoever, any independent co-active power either papal or popular, whether directly or indirectly, is to undermine their great royal office, and cunningly to overthrow that most sacred ordinance which God himself hath established; and so is treasonable against God as well as against the king.”¹⁶

Consistent with these views was his advice based upon the conviction underlying his own practice, namely, to “keep ‘unity,’ then, and be sour,—it is honorable justice—upon any that shall endeavor to break it. He deserves not to live that would dissolve that bond by which God hath bound himself to assist the Church and the Commonwealth.”¹⁷ In a former chapter we have seen his belief in the right of the

¹⁴ Works, VI, pt. I, 42-44.

¹⁵ Works, I, 83.

¹⁶ Works, V, pt. II, 613-614.

¹⁷ Works, I, 179.

Church to coerce her members. Nor was she, he held, in the face of the grave issues to which disobedience to her commands might lead, confined to her own usual means of punishment. When the offense was of the nature of sedition, and he gave to the word a very wide use, the Church might call to her assistance the civil power. In his metropolitan report to the king for the year 1636 he wrote concerning some libellous pamphlets by certain of the clergy that he would see, as had been requested by Juxon, Bishop of London, that the authors were brought before the High Commission Court. "But," he added, "if the High Commission shall not have power enough, because one of these libels contains seditious matter in it, and that which is very short of treason (if anything at all) . . . then I humbly desire that your majesty will call it into a higher court, if you find cause; since I see no likelihood, but that the troubles in the Church, if they be permitted, will break out in some sedition in the Commonwealth."¹⁸ Charles was fully in accord with Laud's views, for on the margin of the report as returned by the king to his archbishop was the following note:

"C.R. What the High Commission cannot doe in this, I shall supplie, as I shall fynde cause, in a more powerfooll way."¹⁹

By the result to both Laud and Charles we know how the combination theory, liberty within the limits of outward uniformity, worked out in actual practice. Concessions were hedged about with so many conditions that ordinary men lost sight of them altogether, and saw only the hard and fast lines of uniformity. In Laud, especially, few recognized at all his willingness to let them believe what they wished in non-essentials. They judged him by what he did, by the things wherein they saw and felt his power, by the dreadful punishments by which he forced them to yield to

¹⁸ Works, V, pt. II, 338.

¹⁹ Laud, Works, V, pt. II, 338.

his ideas in the matter of their worship in all its outward forms. They did not accept the philosophy by which these details could be spiritually unimportant, and yet could, if neglected or opposed, drag down upon them such dire results. As chief administrator of the Church, it fell to him to put these harsh principles into practice. He paid the penalty with his life. The other men of the group were in theory no less severe than he.

Bishop Hall, different as he was from Laud in temperament, agreed with the latter perfectly in the matter of the dependence of the State upon the Church. "It stands with great reason," he said, "that there should be a correspondence betwixt the Church and the State."²⁰ On this ground he justified Episcopacy in England. "Equality would be hurtful to the State," he said, "and in the end breed confusion."²¹ "Can you," he asked Parliament, "chuse but observe the Blessing of Monarchical Reformation amongst us, beyond that Popular and Tumultuary Reformation amongst our neighbors?"²² Episcopacy, once lawfully established in England, existed there of divine right, in the following meaning of the term, as he explained to Parliament, "When we speak of Divine Right, we mean not an express law of God, requiring it upon the absolute necessity of the being of a Church, what hindrances soever may interpose; but a Divine institution, warranting it where it is, and requiring it when it may be had."²³

Both Church and State, he held, were interchangeably responsible for disorders, for, he affirmed in words remarkably like those used by Laud, "The Church and State, if they be two yet they are twins; and that so as either's evil proves mutual. The sins of the City not reformed blemish the Church, where the Church hath power and in a sort comprehends the State, she cannot wash her hands of tolerated

²⁰ Works, IX, 520.

²¹ Works, IX, 520.

²² Works, IX, 519.

²³ Works, IX, 634.

disorders in the Commonwealth.”²⁴ In this light he also called upon Parliament to consider the danger arising through the existence of eighty congregations of sectaries in and about London. Parliament could not remain neutral; either it must condemn the Church altogether as “unlawful and unfit,” or uphold and maintain her by putting down her enemies. The danger from the sectaries was not confined to the Church, for, he said, “if these lawless outrages be yet suffered to gather head, who knows where they will end? My Lords, if these men may, with impunity and freedom, thus bear down ecclesiastical Authority, it is to be feared they will not rest there, but will be ready to affront Civil Power too.”²⁵ He himself wrote to the Brownists, “Contrary to the laws of your prince and country you have fled not only from us, but from our communion. Either is disobedience no sin, or,” he asked ironically, “might you do this evil that good may come of it?”²⁶ In his opinion any deed which threatened the unity of the Church might and ought entail the gravest penalties of the State. “It is possible,” he warned those who would thus sin, “to see a Campion at Tyburn, or a Garnet’s head upon a pole. Treasonable practices, not mere religion, are guilty of these executions.”²⁷

In every case, as we shall see, it is the existence of independent religious bodies which arouses the fears of these men and causes them to waive their liberal ideas for purely political reasons. Taylor considered at length the cases of the Anabaptists and the Catholics. The opinion of the former, he maintained, “that it is not lawful for princes to put malefactors to death, nor to take up defensive arms, nor to minister an oath, nor to contend in judgment”²⁸ is to be rigidly suppressed, notwithstanding any patristic arguments

²⁴ Works, IX, 486.

²⁵ Works, IX, 415.

²⁶ Works, X, 66.

²⁷ Works, VII, 466.

²⁸ Liberty of Prophesying, Sect., XIX, par. 1.

in favor of it, "rather than the commonwealth be disarmed of its necessary supports, and all laws made ineffectual and impertinent."²⁹ Even the Scriptural restraint in regard to the political use of the sword must like many similar passages be interpreted figuratively "rather than it should be thought that Christianity should destroy that which is the only instrument of justice, the restraint of vice and support of bodies politic."³⁰ In such cases "men are not so much to dispute with particular arguments, as to consider the interest and concernment of kingdoms and public societies."³¹

In the case of the Catholics, the objectionable ideas were that the Pope could dispense with oaths and absolve subjects from allegiance to their rulers. "These opinions," he held, "are a direct overthrow to all human society and mutual commerce, a destruction of government, and of the laws, and duty and subordination which we owe to princes."³² A man who spread such opinions was, in his view, "actually a traitor, or seditious, or author of perjury, or a destroyer of human society, respectively to the nature of the doctrine; and the preaching such doctrines cannot claim the privilege and immunity of a mere opinion, because it is as much matter of fact as any of the actions of his disciples and confidants, and therefore in such cases is not to be permitted, but judged according to the nature of the effect it hath or may have upon the actions of men."³³ He was not forgetting here his former tolerant attitude. He took pains to explain how that was altogether a different question. "In matters merely speculative," he said with reference to State interference, "the case is wholly altered, because the body politic, which only may lawfully use the sword, is not a competent judge of such matters which have not direct in-

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., Sect. XX, par. 7.

³³ Ibid.

fluence upon the body politic, or upon the lives and manners of men as they are parts of a community.”⁸⁴ In these speculative matters, as he had said in speaking of the theories of the Anabaptists on baptism: “Their doctrine is wholly to be reprov’d and disavow’d, but the men are to be treated with the usages of a Christian: strike them not as an enemy, but exhort them as brethren. They are with all means Christian and humane to be redargued or instructed: but if they cannot be persuaded, they must be left to God, who knows every degree of every man’s understanding, all his weaknesses and strengths, what impress every argument makes upon his spirit, and how uncharitable every reason is, and He alone judges of his ignorance or his malice, his innocency or his avoidable deception.”⁸⁵ He included both these views in his answer to the question as to how far a prince or government ought to grant toleration. “To tolerate,” he said, “is not to persecute,”⁸⁶ and in accordance with his previous argument as to the wickedness of punishing mere opinions corporally, he declared that as far as toleration was a question of religion, the prince was bound to be tolerant; “to believe so, or not so, when there is no more than mere believing, is not in his power to enjoin, therefore not to punish.”⁸⁷ “But then, because” he continued, “toleration of opinions is not properly a question of religion: it may be a question of policy; and although a man may be a good Christian, though he believe an error not fundamental, and not directly or evidently impious, yet his opinion may accidentally disturb the public peace, through the overactiveness of the persons, and the confidence of their belief, and the opinion of its appendant necessity; and therefore toleration of differing persuasions in these cases is to be considered upon political grounds, and is just so to be admitted or denied as the opinions or toleration of them may consist with

⁸⁴ Ibid., par. 8.

⁸⁵ Ibid., Sect. XVI, par. 3.

⁸⁶ Ibid., Sect. XVIII, Ad. 33.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

the public and necessary ends of government.”³⁸ Here is an open acknowledgment that political considerations set the limits to toleration. The troubled period of the Civil War was not yet the time when men could conceive of conditions under which they could with safety ignore their neighbors’ opinions. Taylor would certainly have welcomed such conditions; for, even while explaining the necessity of political restraint, he urged the prince to show that charity and leniency which is the keynote of his entire book. “As Christian princes,” he said, “must look to the interest of their government, so especially must they consider the interest of Christianity, and not call every redargution or modest discovery of an established error, by name of disturbance of the peace. . . . For if it be necessary for all men to subscribe to the present established religion, by the same reason at another time a man may be bound to subscribe to the contrary, and so to all religions in the world.”³⁹ Political restraint such as he proposed would as he thought affect only the radical factious element, “they only who by their too much confidence entitle God to all their fancies, and make them to be questions of religion, and evidences for heaven, or consignations to hell, they only think this doctrine unreasonable, and they are the men that first disturb the church’s peace and then think there is no appeasing the tumult but by getting the victory.”⁴⁰ This class the prince must put down. It ought to be clear to everyone, he thought, that although salvation and damnation could not depend upon “impertinences,” as he regarded the differences upon which men were wont to separate from the Church, yet that “public peace and tranquility” might depend upon them. When the latter threatened to be the case, the prince was “to seek how to secure government and the issues and intentions of that.”⁴¹ Such action need not, he

³⁸ Ibid., par. 4.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

thought, in any way be a menace to true religion. For to him, "no doctrine that destroys government is to be endured" . . . "religion is to meliorate the condition of a people, not to do it disadvantage; and therefore doctrines that inconvenience the public are no parts of good religion."⁴² There can be no doubt, I think, that the causes limiting Taylor's ideas of toleration were entirely political.

One might, on reading certain parts of the works of Chillingworth, think that he disagreed as to these political necessities of Laud, Hall, and Taylor. Take, for example, the following striking condemnation of the use of force in religion. "I have learned," he said, "from the ancient fathers of the church, that nothing is more against religion than to force religion; and of St. Paul, the weapons of the christian warfare are not carnal. And great reason: for human violence may make men counterfeit, but cannot make them believe; and is therefore fit for nothing, but to breed form without, and atheism within. Besides, if this means of bringing men to embrace any religion were generally used, . . . what could follow but the maintenance perhaps of truth, but perhaps only of the profession of it in one place, and the oppression of it in a hundred? What will follow from it, but the preservation peradventure of unity, but peradventure only of uniformity, in particular states and churches; but the immortalizing the greater and more lamentable divisions of Christendom and the world? And, therefore, what can follow from it, but perhaps in judgment of carnal policy, the temporal benefit and tranquility of temporal states and kingdoms, but the infinite prejudice, if not the desolation of the kingdom of Christ? And therefore it well becomes them, who have their portions in this life, who serve no higher state than that of England, or Spain, or France, nor this neither, any further than they may serve themselves by it; who think of no other happiness but the

⁴² Ibid., Sect. XIX, par. 1.

preservation of their own fortunes and tranquility in this world; who think of no other means to preserve states, but human power and Machiavellian policy, . . . such men as these it may become to maintain by worldly power and violence their state instrument, religion. . . . But they that are indeed servants and lovers of Christ . . . know that to no king or state anything can be profitable which is unjust; and that nothing can be more evidently unjust, than to force weak men by the profession of a religion which they believe not, to lose their own eternal happiness, out of a vain and needless fear, lest they may possibly disturb their temporal quietness.”⁴³

There could be no stronger argument than this against using force in religion in order to preserve the peace of the State; and, taken by itself, it seems to present the strongest sort of opposition to the very system then being put into effect by Archbishop Laud. However, the apparent inconsistency is removed, and Chillingworth’s support of Laud made clear, when one reads the rest of the passage: “There is no danger,” he continued, “to any state from any man’s opinion, unless it be such an opinion, by which disobedience to authority, or impiety, is taught or licensed; which sort, I confess, may justly be punished as well as other faults; or, unless this sanguinary doctrine be joined with it, that it is lawful for him by human violence to enforce others to it. Therefore, if protestants did offer violence to other men’s consciences, and compel them to embrace their Reformation, I excuse them not; much less if they did so to the sacred persons of kings, and those who were in authority over them, who ought to be so secured from violence, that even their unjust and tyrannous violence, though it may be avoided (according to that of our Savior, ‘when they persecute you in one city, flee unto another’) yet may it not be resisted by opposing violence against it.”⁴⁴

⁴³ Ans., V, par. 96.

⁴⁴ Ans., V, par. 96.

Chillingworth spoke here solely of the events which occurred at the time of Luther's Reformation. He condemned the religious war on both sides, but most severely on the part of the Catholics. But Protestants, too, he did not excuse if they, as he said, "did offer violence to other men's consciences, and compel them to embrace their Reformation" . . . "much less if they did so to the sacred persons of kings, and those that were in authority over them, etc." "Protestants, therefore," he continued, "that were guilty of this crime, are not to be excused; and blessed had they been, had they chosen rather to be martyrs than murderers, and to die for their religion rather than to fight for it." He granted that some Protestants were thus guilty. "But of all men in the world," said he to his Jesuit opponent, "you are the most unfit to accuse them hereof, against whom the souls of the martyrs from under the altar cry much louder than against all their other persecutors together."⁴⁵ He was but leading up here again to the claim explained elsewhere that Roman Catholics sought forcibly to maintain unity with error, and that Protestants by "departing corporally from them, whom mentally they had forsaken," by forsaking the external communion and company of the unreformed part of the Church were not guilty of schism.⁴⁶ His attitude on the English situation of his own day is contained in the exception which he made to the statement that there was no danger to the State from any man's opinion. Opinions by which "disobedience to authority, or impiety, is taught or licensed," the forcible imposition upon others of the ideas of the strongest faction, disrespect to kings, divinely instituted and not in any case to be opposed with violence, these things, although connected with religion, but not a real part of it, he acknowledged, did endanger the State and must on that account be suppressed. For this reason he gave his

⁴⁵ Ans., V, par. 96.

⁴⁶ Ans., V, par. 96.

life to the cause which stood for the preservation of outward uniformity.

Even broad-minded Hales saw in the conventicles of his day a political menace. He described them as "meetings upon unnecessary occasions of separation," congregations of "schismatics." Time had, he acknowledged, fixed that name in some cases upon "good and honest meetings"—but even then, he added, it was "perhaps not altogether without good reason."⁴⁷ In early times, he said, "while men were truly pious, all meetings of men for mutual help of piety and devotion, whensoever and by whomsoever celebrated, were permitted without exception."⁴⁸ Separation had come in the first place through the act of the sectaries themselves; they went out from the Church voluntarily; they were not put out. At first the Church made no objection to their going. But very soon, he continued, "ill-affected persons" began to use such private meetings for corrupt purposes, oftentimes for "treasonable attempts against princes and commonweals."⁴⁹ Hence it was found necessary, he said, in order to preserve peace and safety in Churches and States to allow no such private meetings. The Donatists [the first sectaries to leave] were restrained by imperial laws not so much for their errors, as for "their riots and mutinies."⁵⁰ Christians, in the days of their persecutions, were justified, he admitted, in breaking the law by continuing to worship in private. The private meeting then was the only true one. But in a time of religious incorruption, such as he sincerely believed that of his own Church to be, he saw no reason why men should "desire to do that suspiciously and in private, which warrantably may be performed in public."⁵¹

As an illustration of the danger to which such secrecy

⁴⁷ Works, I, 132.

⁵⁰ Works, II, 97.

⁴⁸ Works, I, 132.

⁵¹ Works, I, 133.

⁴⁹ Works, I, 133.

was apt to lead, and also as an example of how he thought such disagreeing groups ought to be treated, he referred to the attitude in England toward Catholics. Their opinions, he said, which differed from those of the English Church were deplored, but no positive attempt was made to force them to renounce them, or to interfere with the private devotions of laymen. Nor were they compelled to listen to the sermons of the English clergy; but an effort was made, however, by fines, etc., to induce them to participate in those services of the English Church which she held in common with the Roman. Thus, he said, it was hoped they would see the harmlessness of the service to which they were asked to attend, and be drawn to it by the beauty which they recognized it as having in common with their own. True, he added, that the envoys who came from the Continent to convert others to Catholicism were either sent back or peaceably restrained; not to do so would have been harboring error. But none of them, he firmly maintained, would have been maimed or killed, had they not been "stickling in our state business, and meddling with our prince's crown" . . . those of them that died, did so "not for religion but for treason."⁵² Here again for the third time, and certainly in unequivocal terms, he pointed to political danger as the reason for not allowing separate religious bodies to exist. If this conclusion were granted, no means were too harsh to use in the suppression of such groups. To avoid "riots and mutinies," "attempts against princes and commonwealths," "Stickling in state business" and attacks even on the legitimate succession; to avoid such evils Hales felt himself forced to concur in even the severest measures of restraint placed by the Church and State upon religious freedom. The situation was similar to that at the time of the riots of the Donatists in regard to which he said, "that the church had afterward good reason to think that

⁵² Works, II, 100-101.

she ought to be rather salutary than pleasing; that sometimes there was more mercy in punishing than forbearing, there can no doubt be made."⁵³ Even St. Austin, he urged, mild as he was at the beginning, "afterward retracted and confessed an excellent use of wholesome severity in the church."⁵⁴ It was only with extreme difficulty that Hales brought himself to admit that this severity should extend even to the death penalty. "I could wish," he said, "that it might be said of the church, which was sometimes observed of Augustus, 'He had been angry with, and severely punished many of his kin, but he could never endure to cut any of them off by death.' But this I must request you to take only as my private wish and not as a censure if anything has been done to the contrary."⁵⁵ If in the opinion of those best fitted to judge, the safety of the State was threatened by lack of unity in the Church, life itself, he held, were not too great a price to pay for the preservation of that unity. Thus, without censure did he refer to Laud's greatest cruelties.

Herein lies the solution to the enigma presented by the intolerance of these broad-minded men of the Church of England, here are the reasons why they would not allow any variations from their established forms of worship, would not allow anything which seemed to them to lead to the existence of separate, unauthorized religious societies. That they were broad-minded I think is clear. No group of men of their day was so much so. They did not, it is true, urge the necessity for complete freedom of belief. There were, they thought, certain fundamental religious facts to the truth of which all men must inevitably agree. The number of truths which they considered thus inevitable was, as we have seen, very small. Even with regard to so important a concept as that of the Trinity men might differ

⁵³ Works, II, 97.

⁵⁴ Works, II, 98.

⁵⁵ Works, II, 98.

without sin. In the matter of these fundamental things no question arose in their minds either of tolerance or intolerance. Right-minded men, they thought, could not help but believe them. Men who denied them must necessarily be evil-doers, actual criminals, and would meet punishment as such. "Moral men" Hales refused to think of as absolutely Godless; because of their good thoughts and deeds, they were, he said, "Christians by the surer side,"⁶⁶ and as such ought to be admitted to the Church. In this matter of complete religious freedom, such as we know in our own day, the limit put upon toleration by these Anglican churchmen was an unconscious one and purely psychological. With them it did not at all enter into the situation which they had to face. They never for a moment doubted that the sectaries believed the fundamentals. "It were a hard case," said Taylor, "that we should think all Papists, and Anabaptists, and Sacramentarians to be fools and wicked persons."⁶⁷ But if we exclude the fundamentals, and consider only the things about which the sectaries were then actually quarreling, the toleration granted by the Anglican Church in matters merely of belief was unlimited. Such matters comprised those portions of church dogma which according to Chillingworth's classification were (1) not founded directly upon Scripture, (2) those based on ambiguous passages, where certainty was impossible, (3) those beliefs in opposition to which others might be cited with equally good scriptural authority.⁶⁸ All these things, as far as individual opinion concerning them went, were matters indifferent, spiritually. They could not affect salvation. They were only adjuncts, helps to religious life, or, as Hall quaintly put it, "not even tile and reeds" in the spiritual house, but rather "some fane upon the roof." Of those beliefs underlying the ceremonial of the Church, many had been introduced by particular Churches for the

⁶⁶ Works, II, 69.⁶⁷ Ded. Epistle, CCCCI.⁶⁸ Ans., I, par. 13.

sake only of order and decency, or for the suggestiveness of their symbolism, that, as Laud said, they might, "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Many other things of belief had been left half-veiled in Scripture, were doubtful things to be arrived at speculatively by profound philosophical scholarship. Here, as we have noted, each of these five men expressed in words that are striking in their similarity the conviction that men's minds are "so variously formed and fashioned" that differing conclusions are inevitable. Hence they held that to force all men to believe alike was impossible, to pretend to, sinful. In these things, in every matter of belief save the fundamental beliefs in God and in his covenant with man through Christ, their liberalism was complete. It could go no further. Here their vision was clear, and true, and beautiful. Differences they recognized as due to psychological causes, and as such beyond human control. Religion was a thing of the spirit, and spirit could not be forced. Only God could discern and understand it, and could alone judge. From their own point of view they put no shackles upon belief. The fundamentals they took for granted as matters of willing, unquestioned acceptance. Only by applying to the fundamentals also the reasoning which they applied to all lesser matters have we been able to surpass these seventeenth century liberalists.

It was not to curb freedom of thought that they insisted upon national church unity. According to them, differences of opinion need not necessarily be any less numerous in the one comprehensive Church than under a system of conventicles which made these differences the grounds of separation. Their intolerance was not the intellectual bigotry of the Inquisition, of Luther, of Calvin, or of their Puritan opponents. Their intolerance was not a matter of not allowing differences of opinion. Just the reverse was true. Their allowance of differences of opinion was a

cause of their intolerance. Intolerance with them concerned not belief, but organization. They would not allow to exist in England groups of worshippers outside of the Established Church. Since the differences of belief for which such groups wished to separate were allowable within the Established Church, these men could see no justification for the separation. But had this been the only reason, their going might have been regarded as a matter of indifference and accordingly permitted. But such was far from being the case. These men looked upon separation from the national Church as a vital danger. Hence arose the development of the second part of their plan, their justification for enforcing the outward uniformity through which unity was to be preserved. Liberty of belief, as we have seen, in everything except the fundamentals was granted. Individual differences were matters of no importance spiritually. No one had a right to insist that his own view was essential to his own salvation or to that of others. He was not asked to give up his view. But he was asked for reasons concerning interests wider than himself to conform to outward practices based upon beliefs avowedly different, it might be, from his own. But though different, these beliefs underlying practices to which he was asked to conform, these Articles of the Anglican Church, were not, as each of these men took great pains to prove, wrong beliefs. Besides, all that was asked was conformity of practice, not change of view. Such a course, in their opinion, was not to compel hypocrisy. One might in good conscience act upon either of two probable views, provided neither was harmful. Since such was the case, they felt that it was not unreasonable to ask men to forego acting in accordance with a private opinion when that opinion happened not to agree with that of the majority of their countrymen as expressed in the Articles of the Church. Thus by liberality of doctrine on the part of the Church, and by forbearance

on that of the individual, might be preserved that unity of organization which they thought it dangerous to break.

The fear which made them thus put a limit on their tolerance, the fear which prevented them from granting men freedom to act upon convictions which they were perfectly willing to allow them to have, the fear which made them psychologically inconsistent, since conviction is only a preliminary to action, this fear was not the outgrowth of religious narrowness, but was founded wholly on their political conceptions. That such was the case it has been my endeavor to prove in the foregoing chapters:

1. By making clear the emphasis which each of them from Laud to Hales laid upon a simple definition of the essentials, and upon the necessity of allowing freedom of thought in all other matters.

2. By outlining their common plan for a comprehensive Church from which it would not be necessary to separate in order to gain freedom of belief.

3. By showing the safeguards which they would throw around the members of such a Church to prevent those that were factiously minded from disturbing the peace by stirring up pretexts for separation.

4. By giving their refutation of the claim that separation from the Church of England was analogous to the separation of that Church herself from Rome, and equally justifiable.

5. By setting forth the dangers which each of them felt would result from allowing separation from the Church of England, from any break in her unity.

These dangers were, to quote them again briefly: "The State whether Christian or Pagan hath ever smarted more or less as the Church hath crumbled into divisions."⁵⁹ The Dutch congregations were a "Church within a Church" and "in time would grow to be a kind of another commonwealth

⁵⁹ Laud, Works, I, 157.

. . . and so ready for what was not fit to express further " [i. e. treason]."⁶⁰ "Those who with impunity and freedom bore down Ecclesiastical Authority would not rest there, but would be ready to affront the Civil Power too."⁶¹ Campion and Garnet died not for their religion, but for "treasonable practices."⁶² In every case, Hales said, Catholics had died only for "stickling in our State business, for meddling with our prince's crown."⁶³ Or, more plainly still, "toleration is not properly a question of religion, it may be a question of policy; and although a man may be a good Christian . . . yet his opinion may disturb the public peace through the overactiveness of the persons, etc. . . . therefore, toleration is to be considered upon political grounds" . . . according to "the necessary ends of government."⁶⁴ "No doctrine that destroys government is to be endured."⁶⁵ That opinion by which "disobedience to authority" is taught is dangerous to the State.⁶⁶ "Ill-affected persons use private meetings for corrupt purposes, oftentimes for treasonable attempts against princes and commonweals."⁶⁷ In no case, therefore, was the danger, feared as the result of separation, other than political. Remove their belief in the dependence of the safety of a monarchical State upon the unity of a national Church, and these men who represented the thought of the Church of England from 1632 to 1642 would have been ready to grant freedom of worship to all Christians. That granting as they did liberty of opinion to Christians, they still clung to unity of worship, was due to that confusing of politics with religion which is the chief characteristic of the England of the seventeenth century.

⁶⁰ Laud, Works, VI, pt. I, 26.

⁶¹ Hall, Works, VII, 466.

⁶² Hall, Works, X, 66.

⁶³ Hales, Works, II, 101.

⁶⁴ Taylor, Liberty of Prophesying, Sect. XVI, par. 4.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Sect. XIX, par. 1.

⁶⁶ Chillingworth, Ans., V, par. 96.

⁶⁷ Hales, Works, I, 133.

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